The Uncrowned Prince

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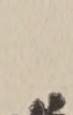
THE

UNCROWNED PRINCE

OR,

The Mystery of the Yellow Manse

JOSEPH J. FARRINGTON



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Dedicated

To My Best Friend, S. H. J.

PREFACE.

To the Reader :

There stands an old yellow brick structure—no matter where—remarkable for its architectural design. Perhaps you have passed by it, and wondered with the author, "What on earth was that built for?" No business is done there, and seldom any one is seen around it, so that it always appears deserted. On one corner attached to it rises a tall, oddly-fashioned old yellow brick house with a great high tower —no less peculiar than the building beside it. Some call it the "Yellow Manse" to distinguish it from the main pile. The structure altogether is as strange to the oldest as the latest arrival in the neighborhood. Mothers frighten their children by telling them that unless they are good they will put them in the old Yellow Manse. This is the name by which the buildings are generally known, and a mystery enshrouds their existence.

The Author.

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THE UNCROWNED PRINCE;

—OR,—

The Mystery of the Yellow Manse.

CHAPTER I.

A REAL DARK NIGHT.

"O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted."

NIGHT is slowly setting over one of our large cities. All day long the rain poured down in torrents upon the dingy old tenements that stand as spectres in the fading western sunlight. The tortuous and murky old river winds its crooked course hard by that sort of factories in which human life is slowly but surely sacrificed for a miserable sustenance. The streets, deep with mud, which had been well-nigh deserted all day, fairly swarm with life as the loud clamoring of bells and the monotonous tones of the husky shop whistles set up a deafening roar. Crowds of women shabbily dressed, bearing on their weary heads a few pieces of wood, scramble out of the large mills that stand by the

river. Now comes a promiscuous rush of old broken-down men laden with sixty or more years of toil; young men, too, whose brows already tell the hard strain of labor they must endure; and finally, little boys and girls with dirt-begrimed faces—children whose lives might be prolonged and rendered infinitely more useful to themselves, their parents, and to the city that gave them birth, were it not that the base hand of Monopoly bade them leave the nursery of their homes, their schools, aye, their very God, to put an additional dollar into the simonious coffers of Trusts. O Truth, everlasting witness of wrongs, behold the condition of these sweltering wretches, and declare in all sincerity, if it is not the hand of civil avarice rung by the rich man's shake, that is the cause of these existing evils, so plainly visible to any one that has a spark of philanthrophy in his veins. It may be objected that parents desire their children of such tender years to spend their days of youth prisoners in sweat-box manufactories? Oh, how the natural love of a mother has changed from what God made it! The mother, whom Christ Himself said, when teaching the multitude, could not forget the child of her womb; and yet we see this strong argument fall by the pernicious act of a mother forgetting her offspring so far, and unsexing all that is noble in motherhood, by virtually casting aside the child of her bosom for the sake of a few paltry pennies that it might earn? Surely the adversaries of the poor would deem this worthy of the greatest con-

sideration, if it were not known by men of common sense that parents nowadays are placed in a sad dilemma with their children. Starvation stares them in the face in two degrees: one mean, the other extreme. They choose the lesser of two evils, and a life of poverty is the only inheritance a laborer leaves to his child. While thus viewing the wear and tear of life in its dreariest aspect, Father Rogers, the saintly old shepherd of St. Mary's parish, reflected deeply on the scene that met his gaze. This amiable and friendly old gentleman, during the period of more than thirty years, watched the interests of his flock with unceasing care. He saw the tide of misery sweep by his door day after day, and none more than he, understood what his parishioners had to undergo endeavoring to eke out a livelihood under an unscrupulous municipality. Here on the veranda of the quaint rectory he was wont to sit when free from the labors of his priestly office, and with words full of sympathy and encouragement, extend to all his neighbors—Catholics and Protestants alike—wise counsels whereby to learn how to bear up manfully under their sufferings. The sun which had now sunk to rest, left a dull, heavy-looking mist hanging over the river, and this mist increased to a hazy vaporous atmosphere that arose from the meadows which stretched over the lower section of the city. The rain which had ceased toward evening, began to descend again, at first slowly, but soon faster and faster, until it came down in torrents. Luckily, the workingmen

had an opportunity to seek shelter before the storm was at its height. Safe on the porch, hidden by two large extending willows that threw their ominous shadows over the old parsonage, sat the genial rector. His large full face, contrary to the ordinary Yankee (for his reverence was thoroughly American), lighted up by two large blue eyes, expressed the warmth of feeling that dwelt in his broad, well-shaped bosom. A tinge of sadness broke upon his countenance as now and then the lightning flashed more sharply, or the dull peal of thunder bellowed more fiercely in the great black sky above. In one of these gloomy moments, Father Delon, who had been travelling in Europe for some months, issued quietly from the sitting-room, and tapped the pastor gently upon the shoulder. Instantly the old priest turned round, and seeing his assistant, he stretched forth his hand, and with a kind, jovial smile beaming on his countenance, addressed the young priest: "Why, George, how did you enjoy your trip? Welcome back! I have been lonely without you."

Before the curate could answer a question, he was asked at least twenty, and finally when the opportunity came, he paused a few moments, as if fearing to speak. The pastor observing the confusion of his friend, continued: "I know, George, why you hesitate. You saw I was in a sad mood when you arrived. Ha! ha! don't mind that, my boy, I'm probably in my dotage;" and the silvery voice of the whole-souled priest broke into a merry laugh.

"Father, why did you look so downcast as I made my appearance?"

"My dear child, I was thinking about a mystery."

"A mystery!"

"Come now, George, I don't want you to get a blue spell after such a pleasant journey. How are your parents?"

"Father, I will never more be happy," was the sad reply.

"What is the matter, pray? Has anything happened to your folks at home?"

Big tears stood in the black eyes of the assistant as he ventured to say: "I have no home."

"Impossible, my young friend," said his aged friend, "are your mother and father dead?"

The curate could not control the emotion that choked his utterance, and he went on in reply to the rector's question, weeping bitterly all the while: "Father, I am a stranger to myself. A mystery enshrouds my soul. I am—I am not George Delon."

"Have you lost your reason, my friend. Do, I entreat you, tell me what has happened to you abroad?"

Silence passed between the two for some minutes. One dared not to interrogate further; the other was so overwhelmed with grief that he could not declare the bitter contest that was raging within him. At last he sufficiently mastered himself to say: "Father, this note will explain all, save the violent sufferings which I endure in my soul."

He then handed the pastor a letter, which the latter opened hastily and read as follows:

"Dear George: Alas! we must part forever. I whom you considered to be your mother, am such only in name, though God is a witness that I have tried to be in reality a mother to you. My husband, whom you designated 'Father,' is not so by nature, being, like myself, only related to you by adoption. Farewell! darling ; I am dying. Perhaps it is better that you do not know all. Good-bye, and may God bless you!

"MADAME DELON."

When Father Rogers concluded reading this strange epistle, he looked pitifully at his young friend. "Queer case this, my boy. What had your adopted father to say about the letter?"

"I had no chance of talking to him, he having long since left the country."

"He is the only person, George, that can reveal your identity. Console yourself, dear friend; I will in truth be a father to you until that time comes when all will be made manifest. I am deeply interested in your case, George, and in the present instance of my life I need your co-operation badly. Pastors, as a rule, don't appreciate their curates till they have left them; but as I have always thought well of you and your services, George, you must now help me out of a difficulty."

"Pray, what may it be?"

"Enough of these matters for the present. What about Rome, and Venice, and Paris?"

The direct manner in which the rector spoke had

the effect of rendering the disposition of the curate more cool and collected. The pastor listened to the narrative of his fellow-priest attentively, and the latter having abruptly finished, the two priests relapsed into a taciturn mood.

This was at last broken when the curate unconsciously muttered, "difficulty." At this significant utterance, Father Rogers rose quickly to his feet and vehemently replied: "Difficulty! aye, and more—a mystery! Father Delon, God willing, it shall be, and must be solved!" Quickly going toward the sitting-room, he slammed the door behind him. The sudden departure, and the strange expression of the old gentleman's face, whose evenness of temperament he had never before seen ruffled, though ofttimes sorely tried, excited the imagination of the young Frenchman. While the storm raged with incessant fury, lost to all the fierceness of the elements, the curate thought only of the mystery of his own existence, and the peculiar actions of his venerated friend, the pastor. Suddenly the tall form of the rector appeared in the doorway, and taking the chair he had occupied a moment previous, sat down, apparently fatigued. The assistant moved toward him and stood by his side. All was as dark as midnight, though the clock just struck the hour of seven. The talk in which the priests indulged was scarcely audible above the tempest. The vivid flashes of light revealed their presence. A finer picture could not have been sketched than that which these two clergymen presented. The one, a man of

stately physique and of nearly seventy winters, with snow-white locks flowing gracefully down upon his broad shoulders, slightly bent; the other, a tall, rather dark-complexioned young man, with large black eyes and exquisite facial appearance. What a contrast by the side of the elder! His hair was as black as his eyes, and hung in abundance round a well-shaped head. A long nose set off thin rose-colored lips. His cheeks, of a graceful cut, and a chin smaller and rounder than the medium, completed the physiognomy of the handsome French priest. They resembled father and son rather than strangers related to each other by the clerical tie, and a promise. Father Delon scanned the worried features of the rector without being observed. After a long interval, during which not a word was spoken, the curate, realizing the danger of standing on a platform which was open on every side to gusts of wind, any of which might invite an electric current and its subsequent damages to enter the parsonage, made his exit through the sitting-room to the parlor, where he lighted the lamp for the benefit of the pastor, who followed him. Beneath the dimly-burning light could be described four oaken chairs placed around a square oaken table. A desk, an old dilapidated sofa, and a few pictures hanging upon the clean white walls, completed the furniture of the room. Silence reigned supreme, while the old gentleman peered out of the large bay-window that looked out on the principal street of the city. The curate watched his actions with the greatest attention. Al-

most immediately after they had been seated, the fixed gaze of Father Rogers grew more perplexed. His large blue eyes expanded far beyond their normal size; his cheeks, always of a healthy glow, grew redder; and his thick lips clinched tightly to his teeth. In this attitude, with his form as straight as an arrow, the rector sat, gazing fiercely out into the storm. The white silken hair seemed to rise from his forehead, and the picture he presented struck intermingled terror and admiration in the heart of the young dark-eyed assistant. "Mystery! mystery!" he shouted, evidently unconscious of the curate's presence. The misgiving Father Delon felt when he approached the pastor in the early evening, now took a greater hold upon him as the hours sped by. "What," thought he, "is the pastor mad? Oh, I have made him thus by the tale of my sad life." The pastor was extremely sensitive to all that appertained to the welfare of others; forgetting himself, he suffered all for the friend he loved. "Father Rogers is mad," the curate repeated again and again. Father Delon's head was whirring round with thoughts that he could not control nor drive away. He prayed for relief, but none came. The sad look which the pastor had shown when he narrated the tale of his life was now changed to one of terrible fury. "He is mad. There is positive proof in his visage." The curate could not otherwise account for the strange phenomena that had taken hold of the pastor than in the awful declaration, "He is mad." Some solution must soon

be forthcoming, else the young priest could no longer stand the strain which the pitiful peculiarities of his superior had stirred up within his brain. All the fearful uprisings that lay siege to an afflicted mind presented themselves, as he meditated upon his own strange revelation. "Whose child am I? God knows," he sadly murmured. A violent shudder shook his frame from head to foot, as he began to soliloquize further: "Maybe I have judged wrongly; perchance, I am mad myself!" He dared not approach his elder, though he kept his eyes fixedly upon him. While thus in anxious expectation to know what might be the cause of his rector's troubles, a tremendous clap of thunder shook the rectory to its very foundation. Dazed by the crash, Father Rogers glanced about him with an affrighted stare, only to discover that his young assistant was anxiously awaiting his return to consciousness from the revery, if such it might be called, that had taken possession of him. "Well, well, George, you heard me say that I had a difficulty to solve; you have one also; both are wrapped up in a deeply hidden mystery. George, with that house yonder rests a tale that we must investigate. It may, perhaps, throw some light upon yourself as well as on me." The curate looked amazed at the white-haired speaker, who, lost in deep contemplation, peered through the rain and mist in the direction of the Omar Mansion, which stood opposite the parochial residence, hidden, like it, in a forest of tall willows and elms. "Mystery, Father? Please explain."

The venerable priest had by this time recovered from the dreadful lethargy which had held his powers of intellect so firmly concentrated that he had completely lost his senses, and once more resuming that good-natured disposition which every one loved to speak of, he rejoined: "Look yonder at the 'Yellow Manse'—the house of Omar."

Father Delon did as he was commanded to do, but saw nothing, except the rain that splashed against the window.

"Do you see nothing?"

"Nothing, save the rain."

"Behold the shimmering light that darts at intervals from the tree tops above; follow its course as it descends."

"I now see a window in Omar's mansion."

"Look at right angles above it, and tell me what you perceive."

No sooner had the assistant beheld the window that was pointed out to him, than his body shook with convulsions. The sight which met his gaze can only be obscurely repeated. Toward the end of the jetted roof, which was sharp-sloping, there appeared a little window of triangular shape. Over it was a second window of the same style, placed in a transversal order, so that the light that shone from both formed a star. The curate, like one transfixed, glared at the curiously-framed window. His black eyes glistened like fire, and his rosy-colored cheeks, now pale from fright, showed that sterner nature that

lay under an accustomed gleeful smile. The former rigidness of Father Rogers' expression was tempered somewhat by his venerable appearance, but the black visage of the younger clergyman lacked this to overshadow the boldness that was now so heavily imprinted on it. What power had thus affected him ? By his side was now standing his best friend, as meek and lovely as an angel. His white locks fell generously over his shoulders, while now and then a slight breeze curled over his white face, brightened by its characteristic cheerfulness. He who but a moment ago was so savage looking, now possessed such powers of veneration that the holy and just alone can have. "Angel and devil!" No ; there was no devil, nor perhaps an angel ; but yet two priests, one overcome by the heavenly grace which beams upon a man accustomed to the practice of virtue, the other charmed, rather cursed, by some mysterious working. Father Rogers watched with kindly eyes the awful countenance of his young assistant, which, the latter finally perceiving, turned his glanced from the enchanted window, bearing on his lips a curl of scorn and contempt at the proceedings he had been compelled to witness. The spell was broken. No sooner had his eyes been taken from the "Yellow Manse" than they lost their fevered glow, and like one who had received a strong current of electricity, his body stiffened out for an instant, and then grew lax. Father Rogers bore him to a chair, and having procured stimulants from an outer room, after much work, at length revived him.

"What has happened, Father?"

"I saw that frightful window. I saw the difficulty, the mystery—dark and deep as hell is that."

Father Delon stared persistently into the large blue eyes of the genial rector, and awaited a reply.

"George, I know what you wish me to do," said the pastor, stroking the black curly hair of the curate, "reveal a mystery; and the same I require you to do for me. This is the reason why I pointed out to you the wonderful window across the way. Now as you have obtained nearly as much information as myself in regard to the queer workings in that mansion, perhaps you can put a better construction on the whole thing. We must put our heads together, and if there is any solution to the wonderful things we have seen, we must work it out." The curate enthusiastically responded: "We will, Father, we will." Saying this, the young priest moved two chairs to the bay-window of the rectory, and both priests sat down to try to unravel the mysterious workings they had seen in the window opposite.

"You think, then, that the devil has set up his workshop in the Yellow Manse; you believe somewhat in the superstition—the nearer the church, the further from God."

"Father," responded the youthful priest, "I am not superstitious, neither am I too credulous to trust stories that have an oddity about them; but what I have seen with my own eyes cannot well deceive me. I dare not look in the direction of that awful spec-

tacle again. That window is bewitched. No sooner do you consent freely to gaze upon it than free will is at an end, and you are compelled to behold those uncanny sights that make the heart grow sick with fear."

Both avoided a view of the window simultaneously. There was no cessation to the storm. It would evidently last, from the present indications, for the night. The wind which until now was comparatively mild, began to blow somewhat fiercely. The shutters of the neighboring tenements registered a high wind, as many were loosened from their fastenings and strewn along the muddy streets. The cries of infants, suffocating in small rooms where seldom a good breeze penetrates, or a ray of sunlight gleams, combined with the turmoil that issued from the factories, and other weird noises for which the night is remarkable, added to the fury of the roaring wind—and all these various cadences were anything but pleasant to the silent, listening ears of the good fathers, as they watch the lurid glare of the heavens and talked over the Mystery of the Yellow Manse.

"What mystifying power can be stored away in that mansion, I wonder?" spoke Father Rogers, as he lighted a long clay pipe that had given solace to his woes on many previous occasions.

"The first time an idea struck me that anything was being enacted there, was on last Thursday. I had just entered my room after attending to a sick call (it was nearly midnight), when I heard a harsh,

grating noise. I looked in the direction whence it came, and saw a tall white-bearded old man enter the iron gate of the Yellow Manse. His presence, I assure you, filled me with conflicting thoughts. What purpose had brought this man at so late an hour to that mansion? I am living in this vicinity over thirty years, and never did I behold such a strange visitor around the premises."

"Father, was it the appearance of the caller that interested you?"

"Aye, George, exactly, and you know the house?"

"No, sir; I understand absolutely nothing of the place. Is it not deserted?"

"Why, by no means, good friend, it is much alive within; but, of course, as you see without, it appears lonely enough. A large family lives there."

"What, a family! This is certainly news to me. I was under the impression that it was long unoccupied; and who are the members of it?"

"The father of the household, I believe, is dead, although I cannot say positively that such is the case, for I have no reason in asserting this, other than, no mankind has ever been seen there."

"Perhaps the old man is the parent," rejoined the curate. "Who else constitutes the family?"

"The mistress is a French lady of royal blood."

"A French lady of royal blood! So I understand that fair France is represented in this city, nay, even in our own parish? I beg you to introduce me, that I may have an interview with her."

"An interview! Why, George she is as much a stranger to me as she is to you."

"A stranger! Is she not a Catholic?"

"Why, my child, everyone within the limits of our parish is not a member of our Church."

"But, Father, I do not grasp your meaning. A French lady, and of kingly blood, and not a Catholic! Hump! a Protestant! that surely cannot be."

"Think you, my son, that there are not French Protestants?"

"No, sir; French and Protestants are contradictory terms. French people may be bad Catholics—some even become infidels—but they never turn Protestant. It is folly to consider a Frenchman the follower of sects. He is at least always true to his convictions. He never protests against the truth, and you know that Protestants are always protesting. No, no; Frenchmen are Catholics or infidels, and they are logical in this sense indeed."

Father Delon expressed the sentiments he felt with impassioned eloquence. As he concluded, the pastor remarked: "Be they Protestant or infidel, I am not prepared to say, but I can vouch that a more beautiful and better bred group of children, it has not often been my good fortune to come in contact with, than those that reside in the shadowy precincts of that mystical old Manse."

"How many are there?"

"I have seen three, but I presume there are at least two others. One, alone, am I to any extent

acquainted with—namely, Miss Angelina. The name, "little angel," expresses but little of the real worth of this estimable young lady."

"How chanced you to meet her?"

"One morning about five years ago, I cannot now exactly recall how long, I was on my way to give the Holy Viaticum to a patient who, I was informed, was at the point of death. The weather was extremely cold, and I had just descended from the door-steps of the church, when I espied the young lady of whom I speak coming across the street, driving a fine horse attached to an elegant carriage. Driving nigh to the curb, she bade me enter. This I did, not daring to speak in presence of my God. Understanding her mission, the young girl drove rapidly to the suburbs, where she halted before a low thatched hut. Having alighted, she opened the carriage, and motioned me to enter. Here I found the poor wasted form of an intelligent-looking old man, who had apparently seen better days. Sister Marguerite, who was attending him, suddenly withdrew as I approached the bedside to prepare him for another and better world. After I had done all in my power to relieve the sufferer, I called Sister Marguerite and Miss Angelina into the room. The patient was semi-conscious. He glanced alternately at the faces of the nun and the young lady, both of whose eyes were suffused with tears. He wished to say something, but his tongue only uttered a few incoherent words, which made the women turn deadly pale. I

have attended the death-bed of hundreds during my mission as a priest, but I assure you, that I never saw such agony depicted in the glances of a dying mortal, as he stared in the eyes of Sister Marguerite and Miss Angelina. After a little while, his breathing became shorter, until with one motion of his glassy eyes, and one lisp of his parched tongue, he gasped out: 'Murder, robbery, divorce and infidelity,' and falling back on his pillow with a heavy moan, he was a corpse. I had been completely unnerved by the tale he told in those four last words, and sick at heart, I made my way to the door. The young lady followed. I jumped into the coach, and was driven rapidly to the rectory. Here we stopped, and without even thanking the lady who had been so kind to me, I sought refuge from the agonizing sight that I had witnessed, in sudden flight to my room. Falling upon my couch, I heard the rumble of the vehicle die away, and then I thought—too late—to ask something of the strange death of the old man. This is in brief my acquaintance with the lady of the Manse."

"Did you never see her again?" inquired the curate, who had listened to the strange episode with pronounced attention.

"Yes; but I never had an opportunity to converse with her. The occasional glimpse I caught of her afterward was when I passed by the mansion, when she would smile mournfully, and then I began to consider that something mysterious might have surrounded the old man's death."

"Could not Sister Marguerite enlighten you upon it?"

"Alas! the poor Sister was from that day heart-broken. I learned that after I had left the hut, ten strange-looking red man, disguised as Turks, forced their way in, and seizing the body, bore it away, leaving the terror-stricken Sister behind. The nun informed me that the young lady did not return to the hut after she had left me at the parsonage. Sister Marguerite made her way sorrowfully homeward, and to this day, I have not been able to obtain a complete story of the whole sad affair. I know that the young lady is closely watched in the Yellow Manse, and not permitted to leave it on any consideration."

"She is a prisoner then, Father Rogers."

"Exactly, poor creature; and with her the death of the poor old soldier is alone cleared up."

"He was a soldier; and of what country?"

"France, I should judge from his accent, and the 'Fleur de lis' upon his worn and tattered coat."

"Ah! this is no trifling case; the actors in it are no common players. Father Rogers, our duties command that we inquire rigorously into the welfare of our flock. The people of the Manse need spiritual consolation."

"But, young man, remember they are Protestants."

"French and Protestant, and the blood of that fair Catholic country tingling in their veins! Never!" was the fitting climax that ended the conversation of the young Frenchman. At the conclusion of these

stirring remarks, the pastor proceeded: "This is an insolvable mystery, too deep and dark for us to fathom. I know the interest that has taken hold of you, Father Delon. There is a wide scope upon which you can work, while I can only suggest what you are to do for the present."

"Insolvable mystery! Why say that, and be so sanguine? Consider that I am a Frenchman, and both of us are priests."

This remark struck deep in the pastor's breast, as the curate continued: "I am perfectly acquainted with the manners of my countrymen, and I hope by your assistance and counsel to make an inroad into that palace and unearth the dark secrets that lie hidden there."

The heavens were by this time crimson with the chain of lightning that incessantly streaked the great black clouds which floated through the lofty space like storm-tossed ships upon unknown seas. The thunder echoed and re-echoed over the great city. There was no stop to the downpour of rain. It fairly descended in floods at every shock of thunder. Terror had seized the hearts of many sleepless and nervous creatures. One by one, the windows of the large frowning-like flats opened. By the flickering glare of the lamps within, and the flashes of the lightning without, could be seen the fear-stricken inhabitants. The rage of the elements did not disturb the serenity of the clergymen so much as the pale starlight that glistened through the tall trees opposite.

Father Delon was all absorbed in the strange case, with which he believed he must contend. He thought he had a clue. "You say that you do not remember the name of the patient; but why is the lady called Miss Angelina?"

"That is presumably her first name."

"Is she the daughter of Omar?"

"I cannot answer that."

"Was it she that summoned you to attend the old soldier?"

"No, child; the call came through the telephone. It was an unusual thing to ask for me in such a way, and the more I am questioned concerning that death-bed, the more confounded I become. Yet, how well the events of that night still cling to my memory! I was sleeping in the room off the hall when the telephone bell rang. I asked who called, in the usual manner of address. There was no response. I asked again, and listened attentively, and then I heard a low, muffled tone saying: 'Bring the last rites of the Church to a dying man; the lady at the door will direct your way.' The voice, now I recollect, was unnatural; it sounded like that stifled utterance which might have issued from a person entombed alive. It struck me forcibly queer at the time, but being awakened suddenly from sleep, I attributed the strange sensation that the voice had on me to my drowsiness. It now takes a far different aspect in my imagination. I see the lips of the dying soldier strive to lay bare a secret that he alone could unfold.

The Mystery darkens at his demise, aye, perhaps dies with him; his body being snatched away when life was hardly extinct; and the prisoner shut up in the mansion palpably manifests something mysterious. Ha! ha! while Miss Angelina lives she must know the sad story that died untold on his lips. Greater darkness lowers on that family by the soldier's death. We must search the secret of the dying man to the end. George, there is a mystery here, how dark and horrible we know not, and yet we must fathom it."

"I will leave you, Father, to collect your thoughts," said the curate. He would have departed had not the pastor grasped him by the arm. "Go not yet awhile. My brain is clouded; yours is still clear. Night and day, George, for five long years, I have watched the mansion for some sequel that would banish the thoughts that have made my hair white. This watching you only must know. I kept my trouble from you till this day, when, seeing the mournful predicament in which that letter had placed you, I resolved to tell you all my suspicions of the strange house yonder."

"But have you not learned more of the Yellow Manse than you have thus far imparted to me?" inquired the Frenchman.

"Father Delon, you are quick to conceive a plan to straighten out matters, yet I would not take you into confidence save for the dignity you bear. I was loath to ever breath to mortal that I mistrusted the mansion. Perhaps, after all, I have done wrong in sus-

pecting that crime has been enacted there; and if my suspicions were made known and found to be untrue, how could I ever repair the scandal which would necessarily fall upon that household and priest in general. I have been a victim of the keenest scruples that ever tried a human being; scandal rang in my ears, as I accused some one, I don't know whom, of treachery; and as you have been a witness of the awful scenes that have so long haunted me, it is now incumbent upon you to assist me. Teach me how to act in order to avoid scandal, if possible, and at the same time to draw aside the dark veil and bring the secrets of that house to light."

"Since, then, Father, you deem it advisible to look into this matter more diligently, and since you consider that I may be able to see something that has, perchance, escaped your notice, we might as well proceed to formulate our line of action. Am I to understand that you never gained admission to the Manse?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever make an attempt at so doing?"

"No; I had no particular reason, consequently I deemed it the best policy to stay away. Curiosity, assuredly, incited me frequently to make an essay of some kind. I laid it aside, however, and awaited an opportunity that has never presented itself."

"It is not too late; it may be afforded this night."

"Impossible! impossible! The storm is so violent that no one dares to venture out at this treacherous time."

"Father, the wind and the rain are the best covers under which to conceal ourselves. We can so disguise our dress as to represent to that family that we are poor pilgrims seeking shelter from the tempest.

"Having once obtained admission within those walls, we shall no doubt ascertain much in the way of clearing up the wonderful tale connected with that house. There is still more that I would hear from you."

"Ask," repeated the rector, wishing to tell all he might know. "My head is filled with many confusing things, and if you probe it by a few questions, some light may be thrown on the subject."

"What made the appearance of the old man at the gate startle you?"

"His visage was so unearthly."

"Perhaps it was the same person that sent the telephone message?"

"Indeed, my boy, likely enough; I had not thought of that."

"What else?"

"A long-drawn-out ghastly face, partly concealed by a wealth of beard whiter than my hair. His body was tightly wrapped in a great scarlet cloak, while upon his snow-white head sat a little white turban. Each night since Thursday he showed himself at the gate, except on Sunday, when it rained. In one of his long sinewy hands he carried a large book, and the strange letters of gold that glittered in the light of

the lamp-post showed that it was written in Arabic characters."

"The Koran, Father Rogers, and that house is a den of Turks!"

"How do you come to that conclusion?"

"Where else could the red men have come from to steal the body of the old soldier from the rude cabin?"

"Not unlikely, my boy; you have put a queer but plausible construction on my words."

"Then to-night is not favorable to meet the prophet."

"Why address him by that title, George?"

"Well, I have judged by the cloak, the head-gear, and the book which you have described, that this is his proper appellation among his tribe."

"If you surmise that I be correct, George, he is a prophet of evil, for never did such an ugly-looking being foretell good tidings."

"Father, have you any basis for such an assertion?"

"My friend, the tales that I could tell would petrify your very flesh and bones, lock your jaws so fast that no power could part them, and change your life-blood into water clear as crystal; in truth, the witches of Macbeth are surpassed. Look! Look! Behold the window, if you would dare see the truth of which I speak."

The curate revolved mechanically in his chair toward the placed pointed out by the pastor. The muscles of the young priest became swollen and

rigid. A shock made his body sway to and fro for an instant, then he appeared as one nailed to the floor. What a scene was pictured before him! Heads of men with bloody visages and seared eye-balls jumped up and down upon blazing spits, while their bodies were buried in blue and crimson flames that darted from a cauldron of burning bones, over which the fiend-like monsters kept pouring a sickly-looking broth. There appeared to issue no stench, but out of these horrifying kettles came hollow, pitiful moans, as if they arose from hells of merciless fire. Limbs of human beings were drying upon lines of gold that were suspended from the ceiling. Upon the ankles and wrists were bands of gold, ornamented with precious stones, that gave forth a dazzling brightness. The walls of the interior of the room were handsomely decorated with paintings of the choicest art. Statues of every form and shape—some of a sweet and angelic expression, others of that indescribable demoniacal aspect; all however, showing the exquisite skill of the artist—were strewn about the floor of polished brass. The ceiling was one whole mirror in which the whole aspect was reflected. A low, deep resounding tone of an organ, concealed by a velvet curtain, accompanied the sound of a voice that was harsh and discordant. As soon as the song of the dead was ended, the light that cast its brilliancy around the room was suddenly extinguished. The young curate fell exhausted into the arms of the pastor, who stood close by, watching his every action.

What a strange picture the young assistant had just witnessed! Like him who has been suddenly stricken by apoplexy or some grievous ailment of a like nature, Father Delon lay almost lifeless in the arms of his dear old friend. His body was as lifeless as that of a statue, save that his black eyes glistened with fire, while a sullen sneer played upon his thin lips and darkened his beautiful face. Father Rogers raised him from a half-reclining position to a standing posture. His eyes kept rolling in the direction of the mysterious window. The old priest tried in vain to place him in one of the chairs, but the charm refused to be broken. Through the star-formed window, he saw an altar descend from the floor above, and up through a brazen hatchway ascended ten red men dressed in scarlet, each wearing a small red turban on his cocoa-nut-shaped head. Upon the altar sat a chieftain of an ugly red color. His jaws hung loosely from an extraordinarily large head, upon which was cocked jauntily, a small white turban. A mouth long and wide, filled with broken teeth, and eyes small and red—these were all that distinguished the ugliest man he had ever seen from being put in the same category with those animals who by their vulgarity of expression have been misnamed monkeys. No beard or hair adorned his crown. Falling prostrate before him, the red men shouted at the top of their voices, "Allah! Allah! God is God, and Mahomet is His prophet." While they prayed, the deity went through all the terrible contortions that the human form is capable of

undergoing. His face performed the most frightful grimaces. Satan himself could scarcely have imitated them, as he sniffed for the first time the hell-fire beneath the burning coals, when he was plunged from the high battlements of heaven into unquenchable torments. His body was of an execrable shape. Like a scorpion, it twisted and writhed until it seemed to be nothing else than a screw. All the while the red men kept calling out to their God: "Allah! Allah!" Some began to incense him, and the curate seeing the abominable act of idolatry about to be carried out, cried out at the top of his voice: "Cursed be Mahomet, the wicked unbeliever!" Immediately the spell was broken; and though the curate glanced at the window scrutinizingly, the charm refused longer to act upon him. When he had recovered from the effects of that awful sight, he looked again in the direction of the Manse, but could see nothing except the rain dashing against the window of the old rectory. Father Rogers soon after had dropped into a nap. The scene in the triangular window had completely unnerved him. The storm appeared to have somewhat subsided, but the interval was of brief duration. Soon again the fierceness of the elements broke loose. The glare of the lightning illuminated the streets; the roar of the thunder and the howling of the wind sounded like the death-knell of some mighty battery. The street cars, during the few minutes that the storm promised to abate, recommenced their traffic. The storm had caused a blockade, and as quickly as it showed

any signs of breaking, one after the other, more cars went rushing by to their destination. The rattling of their machinery, and the sparks that flew from the horses' hoofs, caused such an uproar that their gongs could not be heard. While all Nature was in an upheaval, a blue flame fell from the heavens, a clap of thunder followed the next moment, and a startled cry of alarm awoke the priests from their mournful reverie. "Stop, stop, O God ! my God, mother, God!" These terrible heart-rending words rang the very souls of the clergymen, as they ran out in the direction whence the noise proceeded. Here a ghastly spectacle met their gaze. An elderly woman lay crushed beneath the cruel iron wheels of a heavy car. She was not dead, but the first glance at her mangled form told plainly that her life was fast ebbing away. At some distance lay a young lady stretched in a pool of muddy water. The priests realized at once the serious results of the accident. Father Rogers grasped the girl in his strong, sturdy arms and carried her to the church steps, where he gently laid her, and tried various means to bring her to consciousness. Meanwhile Father Delon worked with that determined energy which a dreadful circumstance alone excites, in assisting the car hands to release the unfortunate woman from the weight that held her down. By their renewed and united efforts the car was finally raised, and the lady, frightfully mangled about the limbs, was taken out from under the wheels. Her dress, slightly torn at the throat, revealed the scapulars ; and Father

Delon, seeing that his services were needed, heard the dying woman's confession. Leaving her side for a moment, he went to the sacristy and brought the Blessed Sacrament to the sufferer; soon after receiving her God she became unconscious. Father Delon knelt by her side, while a doctor, who had by this time arrived, was quickly engaged in bandaging up her wounds as best he could. After some restoratives had been given her, she began to revive. As soon as she ascertained how badly were the injuries she had received, she begged piteously in a low voice for a priest. It was some time, however, before Father Delon understood her request, so weak was her voice. When he found out that she inquired for him, he courteously asked the doctor to stand aside. The physician, who had eyed the clergyman askance as he was saying the rosary near by, with an oath, refused to move. "This is a friend of mine, you papist rascal, and I will stand by her until her life is at an end. If you want to work superstitious practices on her dead body, alright ; but stand back now—you shall learn no secrets here." The young priest, nothing awed, advanced a step closer, but the doctor gave him a blow that sent him reeling to one side. In the meantime the voice of the injured lady was growing weaker and weaker, yet with heart-breaking pleadings she still groaned audibly, "A priest! A priest!" "Oh, you wretch!" were the last words she said, and she was a corpse. Four stalwart men, clad in long red robes, gently took hold of the body and hurried it over to

the Manse. Meanwhile Father Rogers had brought the young lady to her senses. She had apparently suffered no exterior bodily bruises, but her whole inner system received a severe shock. While the good priest was trying to calm her agitated soul, the doctor came briskly up and demanded charge of her, to which the rector readily assented. Both priests, completely overwhelmed with grief, repaired to the church, where, after breathing a fervent prayer for the poor departed soul, they betook themselves in silence to their respective apartments within the old rectory, trusting that the morning light would spread a ray of hope upon a mystery the night had made so dark.

CHAPTER II.

THE ABDUCTION.

THE morning dawned brightly after the rain. The sun came out of the eastern sky refulgent with splendor. The clouds that hung so tenaciously over the meadows yesterday, were slowly rising aloft, and there appeared a silvery spray, like mist, which shed a lovely radiance upon the merry riplets of the old river that went down laughingly to the sea. Everything looked pleasant and clean after the storm. The rickety, tumbled-down tenements, thoroughly soaked by the rain, soon warmed up under the blazing sunshine, and for once at least appeared respectable. The laborers went to

their weary toil with a refreshened step. There was a bright prospect for a cool and invigorating day, and this thought afforded them some comfort—especially those who were engaged in attending fires. Early the good Fathers of St. Mary's were awake, and before the shop whistles sounded for the day's labor to commence, they had finished saying their masses, which they offered up for the poor lady who had met such a frighful death. No one heard of the accident except those who took part in extricating the unfortunate woman from under the wheels of the car. The employees were reticent; the papers did not publish a report of the death ; and the priests, who were so depressed by the circumstances, said nothing. They resolved to study all the details of the case as quietly as possible. Such an extraordinary occurrence, however, is not easily kept in silence. Dame Rumor soon told the neigborhood that something unusual had occurred, and as the report spread, new incidents were added to it, till it increased the interest of the public a hundred-fold. Father Rogers having said his Mass in the chapel of the convent, made known the death of the lady of the Manse to Sister Marguerite, the superioress. Father Rogers valued the experience of this good Sister so highly that he consulted her upon important topics where prudence was a necessary factor. He followed her counsel very often, and seldom or never did it fail to be productive of wisdom. She was a good-hearted soul, some years past forty. She had been a leading society belle in

Paris, but seeing the folly of human vanity, left the whirl of the social board, and at the age of eighteen joined the Carmelite nuns. When Marat, Danton, and Robespierre and their nefarious followers attacked their convent, she, with a few others, made her escape.

Having joined the Sisters of Charity later on, she went back to her native city—Paris—where she administered to the wants of the wretched in the hospitals. While thus acting the part of a tender nurse, caring for the poor afflicted soldiers who had contracted the small pox, which was then prevalent in the city, she caught the dread disease. Her frail young frame could not withstand a great deal, and she was soon reduced to the last extremity. She, however, trusted in the ever strong hand of God; she supplicated Him to spare her; and gradually the disease left her, and she became more vigorous and robust than ever. The traces of the dread plague remained, and considerably blurred her once beautiful countenance. When she was sufficiently well to travel, she was sent to England to recuperate. Having recovered completely, when the war with Russia broke out she departed with a detachment of French troops to the siege of Moscow, where she gained admiration from friend and foe for valor and kindness in attending the wounded. Was it to be wondered at that Sister Margueritehad been a constant adviser to the old pastor? Her checkered and brilliant career eminently fitted her to counsel a king, if need be. But Sister

Marguerite was an humble soul who had left all to follow in the footsteps of her Master, and she sought no worldly esteem for her knowledge and experience. She was not of an inquisitive nature, but when Father Rogers commenced to give an account of the sad accident, she listened with wrapt attention to every word he said. He had not concluded when the convent bell rang for silence, and their conversation was at an end. The pastor repaired to his morning repast, to have a chat with his black-haired assistant. Once seated at the breakfast table, the Mystery of the Yellow Manse was the chief topic.

"So you inform me that the lady killed is not the wife of Omar? and who, indeed, may I ask, is this Miss Angelina?"

"Daughter of the dead woman, whose name I had not time to learn when the rude doctor approached and bade me go."

"I see, Father Rogers, that Miss Angelina must hold the secret of the family of the Manse. Who is the doctor?"

"I presume another burly character who is playing a card in the case."

"I am glad that he did not arrive till I had done all I could for the spiritual welfare of the lady. He was madly nettled when she called me for a second time. Oh, how happy would I be, if she had narrated the story that was on her lips. I felt the same overpowering sensation that you did when the dying soldier lisped those words that have made your life so dreary."

"Perchance they were man and wife."

"Possibly. I had not considered that connection."

"Sister Marguerite insists, however, that the lady is Madam Omar."

"Does she know of the accident?"

"Yes, I told her about it; but before I had ended, she said that she had got an inkling of it elsewhere. You are aware that Sister Marguerite is of French extraction."

"Is that really so? I was not aware of it."

"Well, Father Delon, Sister keeps her secrets from all. It is only lately (and accidentally) that I learned that she was born in Paris."

"A Parisian. Well, I will soon begin to know my neighbors."

"My friend, you shall not admit such knowledge in conversation with her."

"No,—certainly not; she may give us some news that may touch upon this mysterious case."

A knock resounded on the door, and the tall, stately form of Sister Marguerite entered, accompanied by her religious companion. "Father Rogers, our conversation was unfortunately left unfinished in the convent, and I am so interested in the distressing accident that I will be ill at ease till I have learned all you have to say concerning it."

"Well, Sister, the account is complete; as far as I know Perhaps Father Delon can enlighten you a little further."

Turning to the curate, he nodded to him, which

signified that he was to declare all, and at the same time to ascertain any little information that the nun might have heard concerning the Omar family. Sister Marguerite bowed politely, which the latter acknowledged gracefully. The assistant narrated all the incidents of the accident as accurately as possible, touching lightly on the mysterious, now and then, and when he concluded somewhat abruptly, she asked, with an apology, if he remembered aught else which he had not repeated to her. When he hesitated, she did not urge him, but meekly continued : "Father, my question was born of excitement and curiosity to find out all about the strange happening. The house, the people, the accident, have struck me so peculiarly, that I will never rest until I have acquired all—yes, all. There is something difficult attached to all the proceedings that have been transacted of late in the Yellow Manse. A mystery is concealed within its dark walls—and one not easily solved." The tall form of the Sister rose, as if to express with emphasis, her concluding remarks. The manner in which the above sentences were delivered excited the old priest to join in the conversation.

"Sister Marguerite, you seem to be especially eager to learn something of this family in the Manse. Now that we have told you all we know of them, can you not add to our information?"

"I will confess all that I am at liberty to make known."

"Oh, you are free to tell all, are you not?"

A crimson flush came over the Sister's face. The ravages of the disease evinced themselves once more by showing white spots tinted with pink on her cheeks. The voice of the Sister quivered with emotion, as she startled her hearers by saying : " Fathers, I, too, am in possession of a secret as well as you."

" This being the case, ejaculated the curate, we do not wish you to manifest anything that you have promised to keep secret; but if you can render any aid that will be of assistance to us in the present instance, without violating any duty, we would be greatly pleased to hear it." These remarks spoken as they were, nonchalantly, had the effect of soothing the troubled soul of the nun and of gaining the desired information.

" Father Rogers, do you remember five years ago, on a stormy night, I awoke you to attend a dying soldier."

The features of the curate became radiant with hope, while those of the pastor grew more thoughtful. The rector did not answer the question, and the Sister proceeded.

" You do not call to mind, yet you should recollect some of the circumstances. About midnight five years ago, I was aroused from my slumbers by the pitiful cries of a young lady outside of my convent window. I dressed quickly, and going to her, asked the cause of her weeping. She told me that an old man was dying some distance away, and begged me to accompany her, as he had expressed a desire to see

me. I obtained permission to go, and with my companion, was soon standing by the bedside of the patient. Father, there you found me, by what means, I forget, and lucky you made your appearance, as the poor soul was sinking rapidly, and I was so distracted that I forgot to send for you. Father, may I ask who summoned you?"

"Sister, the call came over the telephone; and when I descended the church steps I saw Miss Angelina from the Manse. She awaited me with a coach, in which she drove me to the sick room."

"Miss Angelina! Who is that lady?"

"One question, Sister. Don't you remember something of that dispatch?"

"Yes, yes; I now recall to mind; it was I that sent you the message, but—but—I am so confused I hardly know what I am saying, but—I sent the message."

"Impossible, Sister!"

"Oh! you do not understand about the voice. It frightened you."

"Yes, I confess that I was startled; yet it was not by the sound of your voice—the tone was so queer, so unearthly. It was not your voice; it came from no mortal lips.'

A sweet though sad smile broke over the face of the Sister. "Ha! I deceived you; that is what I intended to do. I had learned to mimic the Turks wailing over the soldiers who had been killed by the French at the siege of Moscow. My tutor (for whom I cared when seriously wounded on the battle-field)

was one of the princes of the Arabic or Turkish dynasty."

"A plausible explanation! A capital deceit! I had been well-nigh convinced that a being of another world had sent me word."

The accustomed genial smile lit up the full round face of the pastor. The handsome countenance of the curate was also wreathed in happy smiles as he heard the message explained.

"Sister, may I inquire what was the reason you had in attempting to conceal your presence when I approached the bedside of the old soldier?"

"Oh! nothing, Father."

"Yes; there must have been. Why have you concealed the things that were told to you that night?"

"Because there was a secret between that man and me."

"That is the reason why you refused to talk of the night's strange occurrence?"

"A sufficient cause. That old soldier was none other than my poor father."

The large blue eyes of the rector opened still wider as this piece of news was imparted to him. In the brown sparkling eyes of the nun gleamed large tears, which she brushed away with a handkerchief which she had kept hid underneath her girdle. Then amidst uncontrollable sobs, she burst forth: "Ah! there lingers over my father's head a dark, unfathomable tale in which I think the mansion across the way shares." The black eyes of the curate rolled

wildly as this piece of information was gleaned from the nun, and he tossed his head to and fro in an agitated manner.

"I have told you everything that I care to speak for the present. Perhaps sometime (and perhaps never) I will unfold to you more. Liberty is a glorious blessing, but how few appreciate it till they are deprived of it!"

When she had thus spoken, she and her companion went quickly from the room, and before the priest could again interrogate her, she had gone to the church, there to seek that consolation "which the world cannot give" to afflicted souls. The clergymen had obtained a clue to their investigations; but they were now aware, in truth, how deep the Mystery was—far darker than they had imagined. How could one who had been so long engaged in the duties of the convent be so entangled in a net of such inextricable meshes? She was only the key to some strange happening that had been confided to her and not directly connected with the case. However, her friends played a strong part in the drama that was being enacted. They had their offices to say, and many other duties to perform, which the world knows nothing about. While on their mission in the parish, they learned that the news had spread throughout the city concerning the accident which had happened to the lady of the Manse. All day long curious crowds gathered around the romantic house, and in groups of twos and threes talked of everything relating to it. Some declared that

the place was haunted ; others maintained that there lived within the ivy-covered walls a royal family who had fallen by degrees to the lowest grade of society. Everybody chattered, and nobody knew who or what were the people that resided there. The old Manse, with a lofty tower pointing into the air, raised itself above the curb on a knoll of grass that grew in untrimmed luxuriance round about it. It stood at a considerable distance from the road, and was protected from the too anxious sightseer by the pennant-like leaves of the willow and the wide, extending branches of the elm, maple, and chestnut. Four stories of polished yellow brick were partly hidden by ivy and creeping vines, which were slowly mouldering away for want of care. The architectural plan was unique. The roof beneath the high tower was sharp-sloping, of the French style, but considerably more arched. The main body of the building presented a series of crooks and corners which, though they could not be said to add to the beauty of the house, gave to it an air of peculiar romance. The large iron gate at the entrance to the lawns was closed, forbidding an entrance to the curious. The house looked as deserted now as it ever had done before. The large double oaken doors were tightly shut at the entrance, while long, narrow shutters barred up the windows. The conversation did not diminish to any extent, and when it appeared to be on the wane for an instant, a new gossiper arrived and filled their credulous ears with a stranger tale than had hitherto been told, and

thus the day went by, the crowd increasing toward evening. All were interested ; but assuredly there were others who did not congregate around the house, who were infinitely more taken up in what was being done within that strange Manse than all those that stood without. All day long a tinge of sadness overshadowed the features of Sister Marguerite, which she tried in vain to hide from her other Sisters. They noticed her dejected look, and by their words of sympathy endeavored to cheer her. Every one of the nuns in the convent loved the superioress dearly. She was a real mother to them, and more especially to the younger ones. The harmony of their sweet voices were hushed that evening in the precincts of the cloister. Nor was the parochial residence less silent. The priests were engaged in their ministerial labors until nearly nightfall. After supper had been partaken of in silence, Father Delon entered the little parlor at the invitation of the pastor, who preceded him. The curate walked at once to the bay-window, out of which they had watched the wonderful sights the night previous. He felt within himself that nothing could control him except his own will, and he longed for another glimpse of the scenes, that he might study them more closely. The window shade, however, was drawn down tightly, and only the outside of the plain old-fashioned window in the Manse could be seen. When the pastor saw that the attention of the curate was fixed upon the Yellow Manse, he surmised the train of his thoughts.

"You do not often behold such scenes as those of which you were a spectator last night?"

"But are you so privileged, Father? You know you made a mistake when you declared that the devil did not work on rainy nights."

"Ha! you are in a jolly mood," and the rector laughed loudly, while the curate evidently wished to discuss the more serious side of the question. Without the semblance of a smile on his placid face, he began: "Father, I suppose Sister Marguerite put aside your belief in spirits to-day."

"Yes, my child, to a great extent. She told us a deal on the subject, and if she would only confide all her knowledge to us, no doubt we would be much benefited all the way round. I am tired of pestering her to find the ins and outs of that eventful night, five years ago, and yet I obtained more from her to-day than I ever knew before. You are of her nationality, and consequently may understand a French woman's ways better than I do; hence to-morrow, George, let us hope by your tact that she will convey some revelation that may lead to the discovery of your mystery, and that of the Yellow Manse."

The two friends ceased speaking. The Angelus just then resounded through the lofty tower of St. Mary's, and the weary day of the poor workmen was at an end. The same toiling masses of humanity surged by the door of the rectory, save that a face here and there was missing and had gone to see a brighter day. It is true that the healthy atmosphere

worked wonders in their cnodition, but it must needs have performed miracles to support their lives, which were so unscrupulously being drawn out to an early close by the leaches of consolidation. The mighty dollar is ever the cry of the Monopoly and Trust. The laborer and his family must be trodden in the mire to raise aloft the full blown avaricious mammon hunter. The sun had now run his course, and the western horizon slowly darkened as the rays of light gradually fell behind the mighty ocean, and were lost till the rising morn. The stars peeped out from behind the azure clouds that drifted into innumerable shapes of architectural grandeur, setting aglow with superb radiance the heavenly mansion that lofty souls look up to admire. Soon the modest moon came hovering above the old river, reflecting the sublimity of her sheen in the silvery tide. The meadows, lulled to and fro by the evening breeze, revelled in the sombre glory of the night. The beauteous beams of the moon, the countless stars and the silver-lined clouds glistened forth with their enchanting lights reflecting on the city. The houses, lighted by the lamps within, and enhanced by the glory that everywhere shone forth, completed the clear and beautiful evening picture. It was a weird scene, full of beauty. Thus musing on the daily course that intervenes in the vicissitudes of Life and Nature, the two priests passed the evening until the hour for retirement. They had scarcely bade each other good-night when the door-bell rang imperiously. The curate an-

swered the call, but no sooner had he opened the door than he was laid low by a terrible blow that was delivered from behind by a short, rascally-looking fellow. There was a short scuffle, and before Father Rogers could interfere, the young curate was dragged down the rectory steps by two men, and hastily thrown into a covered wagon, which they drove rapidly away. The pastor stood astounded at the abduction of his assistant, and at length, having recovered from the stupor which seized him, an alarm was useless. Instantly he thought of what steps he should take in order to aid his beloved friend. He was in a dilemma at first, how to act. Would he notify the police, and have his esteemed friend brought perhaps into a scandal? This was the last resource. Suddenly an idea came to his mind. He would send for his friend, a clever young artist, who was as skillful in tracing the track of a villain as he was in drawing the outlines of a picture. He would confide the disappearance of the curate to the young man, hoping by his tact and indomitable energy and courage that he would safely return the young priest to the parochial residence. A messenger was quickly dispatched to the residence of the artist. Breathlessly the young man made his appearance, as if he had surmised that some evil was rife. Louis James (for this was the artist's name) was a perfectly built lad of twenty, with broad, shapely shoulders, and he was fully six feet tall. His face was very pleasant, and of that mild expression which is so frequently admired

in children. He had a clear skin and finely cut features. His hair was raven, and fell in waves on his fair brow. A well shaped forehead overset a well formed nose and lips, while his cheeks were fair and plump. He was exactly the counterpart of Father Delon, though slightly more handsome. It was easy for Father Rogers to explain his business to the young man, and giving him his blessing, he sent him on his errand. No sleep closed the eyes of the faithful old rector as he thought of the possible fate that awaited his young assistant. He, however, relied a great deal on the sterling qualities of his friend, the artist, to bring about the safe return of his devoted curate. It was nevertheless a perilous undertaking, and he could not content himself until his two friends shared with him the same roof again in safety. No amount of persuasion could set his weary heart and head at rest that night. Day dawned as brightly as on the preceding morning. He made preparations as usual for his morning Mass, which was offered up in the church so as to afford the more pious of his flock an opportunity to attend. This portion of his sacred duty being ended—after making his thanksgiving,—the rector repaired to the breakfast table. He could eat nothing. After drinking a cup of coffee, he threw himself on the sofa, hoping against hope, to indulge in a little sleep to rest his fatigued body. All was in vain. Sister Marguerite called, and he would not have her depart without seeing him. "Perhaps, he reflected, I may search the depths of

the mystery through her, and find it not so deep as I anticipate. Ah! if she would only tell all!" These were the thoughts of the priest as Jeremy Owens, his faithful servant, a second time announced the arrival of the Sisters. Quickly she was ushered into the presence of his "riverence," as Jeremy insisted on calling his master. Father Rogers in all his dealings was surprisingly outspoken; he kept nothing rankingly in his bosom, but what he had to say came from his lips without much adieu. He considered that bluntness with the present hearer was a necessary factor. He estimated the nature of the Mystery, weighed every incident connected with it, and finally concluded with a recital of the forced departure of the curate. He did not see at once the effect that the last detail had on the nun's weak system; and when he had spoken the last word, she was quite overcome from shock. When she had recovered from her surprise and terror, the true womanly nature that had sustained her in many a previous conflict showed itself.

"Nothing more?"

"No, Sister; I think it is your time to instruct me."

The nun hesitated for a moment, but immediately began to speak with stern deliberation:

"I know the Yellow Manse contains a secret, but what it is I am unable to say. I am aware, too, that you were witness of the strange doings of that house, and I feel that I am justified in telling to you what I have kept secret from all. My family were of royal

blood, related on my mother's side to the martyred Louis the Sixteenth of France. When, at the close of the century, all that fair land was in a violent uproar, few families and few houses escaped total destruction. Our family, thanks to a merciful God, remained intact, except myself, who, at the massacre of the Carmelite nuns, whose order I joined, fled from the city. When quiet was again restored, I went back as a Sister of Charity, and served in the hospitals of Paris. My father being a general of renown, seeing that he could not attain any advantage to the descendants of Louis by remaining neutral, attached himself to the fortunes of Napoleon, and fought with him at the battle of the Pyramids. During his absence, false tongues disseminated rumors in his ears against my mother ; and having returned from his protracted campaign, she noticed how cold and changed he was to her ; but she nevertheless bore up heroically under her severe trials. One loved the other as devotedly as man and woman ever loved. Their marriage was not the outcome of a whimsical fancy. They were born and brought up as playmates. They went to school together, and their families were united by the strongest bonds of friendship. But legions of devils possessed men in those days when revolution shook the kingdom to its very centre. Husbands charged their wives with the most outrageous crimes, and wives made counter charges, even more revolting in their nature, against their husbands. Daughters declared for their mothers, while sons sided with their fa-

thers; and thus families were divided by the bitterest quarrels. Total depravity spread throughout the once grand country, and crime was practiced in every despicable and abominable form. Royalty suffered most; but when Bonaparte took the reins of government, his presence on the throne stopped the more flagrant and open abuses. However, bands of the most depraved wretches leagued together in secrecy, and put into execution the most ignoble and sickening crimes upon society. In the meantime my father saw that he had made a serious mistake in treating my mother with such cold indifference, and he learned a lesson after that to regard her as the angel of his house. Another child was born to them. Some time after I was summoned to attend the sick in the outlying districts of the city, and, alas! what has occurred since to my dear family, I only know by remarks of my dying father. He lived happily, following in the ranks of Napoleon till 1814-15, when the allies of united Europe (under Wellington and Blucher) invaded Paris. A detachment of that general's army plundered and burned to the ground my father's palace, and he, wounded in defending my mother against the mob, would have been slaughtered in cold blood were it not for the prayers and tears of my baby sister."

"Strange," interrupted the pastor, filled with awe at what he had heard, "that such a premeditated attack should have been made against your house. Whom do you think instigated it?"

"The secret organizations that my father fought against, with all the means in his power. He saw what ruin they had caused to his beloved country — how they swept aside the altars to give way for their debaucheries. Yes ; he was marked out for the slaughter, and a terrible tale hangs on those last words : 'Murder, robbery, divorce and infidelity.'" The mention of these opprobrious terms filled the soul of Sister Marguerite with ungovernable fear. She could not repeat them without a shudder, and this because she dreaded that perhaps her own dear folks were tainted with some or all of them. After a terrible pause, the superioress drew forth her handkerchief, and wiping away the remaining tears that continued to flow from her large brown eyes, she proceeded with her narrative: "Robbery indeed would be a simple term to express the distress in which my poor father was found. He who possessed almost untold wealth was deprived of everything— even the roof that sheltered his poor corpse."

"Sister, who were the red men that took away his body?"

"That I cannot tell. Oh, unhappy me, could I but find out the young lady that came for me that night!"

"Was she not the same that drove me to the cabin?"

"Yes ; but I never found out her name."

"Why, that is Miss Angelina of the Manse."

"Miss Angelina ; that name seems familiar. The name of my dear little sister. Oh! where, alas! is she to-day?"

She wrung her hands wildly with grief, and between sobs went on: "Is it possible to interview this lady, Father?"

"I think not, for the present."

"Is then all the cause of my woe so near at hand, and yet I cannot find out the truth? Oh, how terrible is the suspense." The Sister's head drooped low and her tear-stained face was hidden from view by her snow-white cap. Father Rogers did not appear to notice the altered position of the nun, and he renewed his investigations.

"Sister, you have given a general account of all that befell your family, but you have been careful to avoid particulars. I know the reserve which you treasure so highly to prevent scandal, but facts must be had to make any substantial beginning to right the trouble of your people."

"Father, many a day I contemplated what my dear parent might have revealed had he lived an hour longer, but his life and that of my dear mother's and sister's are summed up in one word, "Mystery." When I landed in America, it was my last thought to have ever seen the face of one of my dear ones again. I saw the face; I heard the tale of 'murder, robbery, divorce and infidelity!' Question me still further, if you think that I can furnish you with anything that may serve to lift up the load that lies so heavily on my own loved ones, and that I may see them once again, whether it be in the land of the living, or if dead, I may behold their lives and honor unspotted by any stain of sin."

"Your father doubtless was a victim of Freemasonry."

"Likely," murmured the nun. "But whence came those strange men?"

"From the Yellow Manse, where Miss Angelina dwells."

"A girl in company with such villains. A prisoner. Ah, that is precisely the fact. If we could rescue her, how great a weight would be lifted off our bosoms. She certainly can tell something of my father's last illness; she alone can reveal the mystery that enshrouds his death. May I never die until I learn the fate of my family!"

This ended the discourse. The good Sisters prepared to depart; Sister Marguerite half confused, half stupid at the examination she had undergone. She had hardly closed the door when an old man, neatly dressed, accosted her: "Madam," said he, "may I ask what was your name in the world? Sister Marguerite, completely taken by surprise in being confronted by such an audacious inquiry, raised her eyes with a startled looked, and recovering her self-possession, calmly replied, "We cannot tell that, my friend."

"Bon Jour, Madame," was the curt retort, and the stranger disappeared as quickly as he had come. This meeting, strange through it was, did not disconcert the Sister. Her thoughts recurred to sunny France, the happy home of her early days, and her afflicted family, wondering what had become of them. Many fanciful and trying subjects racked her brain

during the remainder of the day. The Sisters of the convent noticed that something wrong was working within her. They hesitated to ask her the cause of her sorrow, fearing that they would make her feel it more keenly. Father Rogers walked up and down the veranda with a long, sturdy pace. His mind was a blank to all but one consideration, namely, what had become of the curate? He was ever of a meditative turn of mind, and he was never done thinking how he could best occupy himself for the welfare of those entrusted to him. How could he answer for the disappearance of Father Delon? How could he deliver him from the hands of those wretches who had assaulted and stolen him away? "George must be found to-night and brought back," said he, softly. "Oh, great God! what if he were brought back dead!" He shuddered at the mishaps that might befall his young assistant. "And yet if he were killed, I would have to hold myself responsible to the civil authorities for not informing them. The Mystery of the Yellow Manse should come to light, but, oh! the scandal." The old priest managed at length to shirk the revery that was preying upon him, and he set about to perform his clerical duties with an air of devotion, even though at times his thoughts reverted from them. Occasionally he raised his heart aloft and breathed an anthem of sweetest prayer for his absent friend. Across the road near the solemn old Manse, there still lingered groups of gossipers. The shade of the trees, rich in foliage, that surrounded

the building, afforded a pleasant retreat for those who had nothing else to do but to keep cool. The sun shone as brightly as if nothing was amiss in the world. The clouds, tinged by the rays of the golden sun, shone in the mirror-like waters of the old river, which rolled out its ruffled contents into the bay. The meadows, fresh and green, gave forth a fragrance that instilled new life into the mowers who had laid their scythes away to rest. The cries of the children in the tall tenements never ceased, but kept going with ever increasing variance. The dissonance could not have been more disagreeable, except perhaps the yells and croaking of the street urchins who paraded their tin-can company very unceremoniously through the hallways that they found conveniently open, kicking over everything that impeded their march. Thus the day passed on, and the harsh whistles of the shops turned loose the same broken-down masses of humanity that the rector was wont to view through all the seasons of the year. The mists of night, like great curtains, dropped slowly over the city's great tenements, and soon the weary laborers within were ushered into the land of repose. Father Rogers was still awake in the parlor, waiting patiently for the return of the artist or the priest. The night was far spent, and yet there was no sign of either approaching. The old priest could no longer resist the powers of sleep, and his head nodded slowly but irresistibly on his bosom in repose. How long he was in that state he did not know, when he was violently

awakened by a stranger who struck him with clinched fist. Jumping up in consternation, and dazed with sleep, unconscious of what had happened, Father Rogers thought himself the victim of the night-mare, and staggered across the room and fell heavily. He had hardly recovered, when the stranger, drawing a pistol from his back pocket, walked deliberately over to where the old man lay, and prepared his weapon for use. The face of the stranger was ugly in the extreme. His large crooked teeth protruded from out a large mouth. His hair was of a dull red color, and a beard of several weeks' growth concealed a square-formed jaw. When he had inserted a bullet into the barrel of his revolver and made it ready for use, he smiled sarcastically at the outstretched form of the rector.

"Ha! ha! I have you now in my power," and again laughing aloud, he continued, harshly: "I'll blow a hole through your secretive head, and then I'll be sure that the secret shall not out. This is he whom I have been after many a day. I'll let the young bird fly from his cage as soon as the old one is trapped." A second time he began to make ready his aim. "You have the secret, priest; I have it, too; I alone must keep it. It is too precious to give away, and I am not certain that you will keep it safe. Did you move, papist?" This vile epithet was spoken with so much vehemence that Father Rogers rallied, smiled and gently closed his eyes again, not realizing the danger in which he was. "You mock me, hey!"

He raised the pistol to take aim, but for some unknown reason faltered. "No superstition can save you now. Pray hard, old man, pray quickly ; the hour is at hand ; come, make ready ! " He grew more enraged. "The secret ! the secret ! Papist priests are not tell-tales ; but there may be exceptions. My life is in danger ; while you live, my existence is miserable. You know that Miss Angelina loves me ; yes, you alone know ; she told you, I am certain. Did I not see her drive you out one night, priest ? Since then she refuses to speak to me, and rebuffs me on every occasion with scorn." He hissed every word like a madman. "You know too much about the Yellow Manse." Saying this, the scoundrel dealt the old man a severe blow on the head with the end of his weapon, which, instead of reviving him, caused only a pitiful groan to escape his lips. "He sleeps well," growled the brute. "He has a calm conscience, no doubt, after estranging my darling from me. Oh ! if he never awakes, then the sad memory that harrows out the soul of a murderer would not trouble me. He moves. Murder is the only way out, to squelch him and his babbling tongue. Kill him, aye, kill ! Murder ? I am a coward. Still, the wretch holds the secret of my life and love. Only two nights ago I heard him talking to my gentle Angelina, just after the accident. Oh, I would give a thousand dollars to have her speak to me as she addressed this gray-headed papist. My enemy lives, if not in the person of this man, nevertheless in the heart of his friend, Louis James. An-

other plan, better than death. I will make the old man tell whom she loves, or else I will rip him up as I would a carcass on the dissecting board. Giving the priest another stroke of the revolver, this time a little more gentle, but nevertheless sufficiently hard to make him groan with pain, he yelled: "Come, old man, get up," grinning with devilish acrimony in the face of the rector. This failing, the doctor, who had injured only to cure, administered restoratives, which had their effect. Father Rogers awoke more quickly than he had anticipated, and jumping from the sofa, he flung the crazed doctor to the floor. The doctor, chagrined at the sudden onset of the priest, rallied to his feet, and easily knocked the old man down, who was so weak as to be unable to combat. Grasping the prostrate clergyman by the throat, he cried: "Tell me, priest, what Miss Angelina whispered to you last night, or you shall not live to hear another tale." The white face of the priest grew to a sickly purple, from the shake which the savage had given him in order to make him understand that he meant what he said. His only answer was a gasp; he could say no more. "Tell me, priest," repeated the frantic doctor, "the secret of Miss Angelina's love." There was no response, and the angry demon shouted: "It still lacks five minutes to four; day will soon be here; but none will rise for you,—a long, dark night alone shall greet your awakening. One minute is already gone. Quick, another, stubborn rascal!" he muttered, as he viewed the perfect calmness of the priest's face. "You

consider my threats as an idle hoax. This good knife will attest the truth of my words. Drawing a keen-pointed knife, he brandished it in the face of his victim. "One more minute"—the villain was desperate; he meant to carry out the awful sentence. "Thirty seconds," and he raised the knife high above his head, to make certain of the deadly effect of the thrust. "Ten," and he put his watch quickly into his pocket. "Five! The secret or death!"

"Neither," shouted the young artist behind him, as he grasped the hand of the would-be murderer and wrenched the knife from his grasp. The doctor, like an infuriated madman, sought his revolver. It was nowhere in sight. Louis seeing his discomfiture, remarked, gleefully, as he backed into the corner of the room: "What will it be, doctor, revolvers or knives?" The sudden attack of the young artist brought him to his recollection, and he realized his predicament—brought face to face, unarmed, with his bitterest foe. He understood that the young man would stand no nonsense, and he gazed at him, appalled with terror, as he saw himself in his power.

"Revolvers or—oh, I guess you are better used to the tools of a physician," said the artist, abruptly, throwing the dagger at the terrified man's feet. The doctor, seeing that a duel was inevitable, begged piteously: "Oh, mercy! mercy! Don't shoot."

"Go, coward, and never let me catch you skulking about these premises again at such unseasonable hours." Louis James opened the door and gave the

astounded doctor a push that sent him tumbling down the rectory steps, and turning back into the parlor, attended to his old friend the pastor.

CHAPTER III.

A UNIQUE BURIAL.

THE sunshine broke pleasantly upon the old brownstone rectory, giving it an air of renovation. The outside, while looking altogether comely, was far different from within. Father Rogers lay upon the sofa, snoring loudly, while everything in the room showed the disorder that had taken place. The table was turned upside down, one of the chairs protruded through the window panes, and several pictures that graced the walls were shattered and turned sideways—all telling of the antics of the intoxicated doctor. The large genial face of the rector was wreathed in happy smiles. The cares of life were being solaced in a much needed repose. He was the picture of health, and the pale, care-worn lines of worriment had disappeared as he slept. His snow-white hair fell over his broad brow and shaded his large blue eyes from the morning sun that penetrated through the broken window panes, and shone brilliantly in a halo round the head of the sleeping pastor. The thick lips were partly compressed, open enough, however, to reveal a white and well preserved set of teeth. A more peaceful repose could

not be imagined. This, however, was soon destined to be disturbed; for Jeremy entered, accompanied by the young curate. Both were struck by the amiable expression of the pastor.

"Father Delon, doesn't his riverence look purtier than iver this mornin'? Och, but don't he sleep aisy? It's meself that me poor old head could enjoy such a nap; none but the holy and good can take sich rest." Continuing in the same tone, the good-natured Irishman questioned: "Wirra, your riverence, may I be askin'—if it's me business—where have ye been? Shure, I've been very lonesome without ye, fretting like a spoiled child for his father."

"Indeed, Jeremy, I am glad that you take such an interest in me. I was enjoying a little recreation at the expense of my friends."

"Well, now, Father Delon, if I had been away, it's little rest I would be enjoyin'—behind bars, of coorse, at the hands of the county—at least that's what his riverence would say when I put in me appearance. Recreation! I'm thinkin' that you did not sleep in a very comfortable place. Arrah musha, I had me eye on ye."

"What do you mean," asked the curate, sharply, which question the son of Erin interpreted wrongly.

"Jeremy mane, is it, and the baste of a doctor goin' to cut up yer body for practice?—sacrilegious brute! Jeremy to be mane." And the sexton, to add emphasis to his remarks, took a running jump across the floor, which noise awoke the pastor.

"No, no, Jeremy, you did not understand me! I did not say that you were mean."

"Oh, then, you'll excuse a poor deaf, ignorant Irishman. I'm getting bothered," and he really meant what he said; for when Father Rogers, arousing himself from his drowsiness, answered, "alright" to the Irishman's summons, Jeremy sulkily left the room, declaring that he wasn't "all fight," as this was his natural mode of acting. When the sexton left the parlor, the pastor, extending his hand to the curate, shook it warmly, eagerly inquiring his whereabouts the previous night. "Oh," said the young priest, "such an ordeal as I was forced to go through I shall never forget. When I was driven away from here, I thought that I would not return alive. However, I trusted in a kind Providence, which has conducted me safe and sound to you once more."

"But where have you been?"

"When I recovered consciousness, I found myself bound hand and foot. A strong steel cage, with bars three inches thick, held me prisoner. There were several other cells in the place, but I am not sure that they were occupied. The prison was cold and damp, while the odors that rose from it were stifling. I was in a frightful predicament—the stench was fast suffocating me. I resolved to resist all the influences of any hellish kind, as long as there was a spark of life in my body. The smell, while nauseating, was not strong enough to overcome me. Now and then a tall and ugly man paced up and down by my door, as if on guard.

He gave sinister looks at me from time to time, as if he were apprehensive of some impending danger. I perceived, as he went by, that his face became more enraged each time he made his rounds. He talked in a subdued voice, lisping something that I could only faintly hear. Time passed till the clock struck again. The door of the cell was pulled suddenly open, the keeper entered, handcuffed me tightly, and dragged me to the centre of the prison, where there was a great manhole. Into this the ugly old man lowered me, notwithstanding my protestations and prayers. By means of a rope tied under my arms, an elevator bore me down, I know not how far ; but it seemed as though it was never to stop, until it landed into the very lowermost regions of the earth. Finally, after a long and fearful descent, the elevator halted with a sudden jerk, throwing me into a pit of interminable gloom. Here terrible sounds and imprecations, accompanied by spirit-like rappings, shrivelled up my soul. I trembled from head to foot ; the cold sweat fell from my brow in large drops. The air was damp and oppressive. I seemed to be transplanted from one zone to another. Fountains threw up their silvery spray, which froze as soon as it fell upon my shoulders. I stood as a great icicle frozen to the immense mass of snow and frost that surrounded me. I strove with might and main to free myself, but, alas ! could not. My breath for a moment seemed to leave me as the cold, icy water dashed over me. Suddenly a hundred lamps or more, encased in a chandelier that

hung in midair, cast brilliant beams about the place. I saw a mountain of ice beneath my feet. The light relieved my drooping spirit from the agony that oppressed it. A little later a blast of hot air began to dissolve the ice around me. I renewed my efforts to extricate myself, and when almost about to give up in despair, one of my feet became relaxed, and an instant later I was running down the slippery descent. I could not stop my awful pace. Down, down, I shot, at a terrific rate of speed, until I landed, horribly shaken up, in a large lake. I must have plunged deeply, as I thought I never would rise to the surface. On all sides great furnaces gave forth intense heat. Blue and purple flames darted out like squirming demons in the tortuous eternal fires. I was compelled to sink beneath the tide, time and time again, in order to avoid the flames. My position was extremely critical. My head alone was above the surface of the water, and even that portion I was forced to shelter by an occasional plunge. 'O God!' I cried repeatedly, 'am I a victim of some dreadful dream, or am I really a resident of Purgatory?' Yea, I thought that I was cast into the regions of perpetual strife and sorrow, so sadly was my soul afflicted. Every time I breathed a prayer I felt relieved, and I can assure you, Father, that I prayed almost incessantly. A loud, hollow voice stunned my ears by its lamentations: 'O sinner, thou wilt remain on the rack till thou shalt give up thy secret.' I looked in the direction whence it came, and I saw a great high tower, upon

which was seated an indescribable monster. At the sound of the bell the lights in the wonderful chandeliers were extinguished and the doors of the furnaces closed. All was again in darkness. Instantly I heard a whirring sound in the air, and before I was aware of my plight I was hanging by the hair from the tower, overlooking the frightful abyss. Speechless, I could only see the smoke of the furnaces beneath me. My body swayed, like a pendulum, to and fro, and I turned a complete somersault, falling down, how far I cannot tell, until I landed in a spacious room filled with all kinds of startling sights. I saw here headless men in burning cauldrons."

"You were then in the Yellow Manse!" ejaculated the pastor.

"Yes; that I am now led to believe, but how I was admitted there I cannot explain; so I will tell you of my escape. After I had viewed the mysterious room, in which I suppose the triangular window was, but which I could not find, I was roughly forced upon another elevator, which descended a short distance, and then went up to a great height, where it stopped before two large oaken doors that swung mechanically open, and here I was placed in charge of the ugly keeper. He put me in my cell, and having watched an hour or so longer, departed. No sooner had he left the prison than an old man clothed in rags, but having a kind face, bade me follow him. I did as he commanded, and when we came to a massive iron door, he took out a large key, with which he cautious-

ly unlocked it. This admitted us into a long, high-vaulted corridor, down which we briskly walked, until we came to an immense shute. "Father Delon, your life is in danger," said the old man; "this opening leads to freedom." The voice was so mild and reassuring, that without the slightest hesitation I jumped in and slid and rolled well-nigh a hundred yards until I tumbled into a stack of hay on the open street. Once free, I wandered aimlessly about like one held captive by some illusion, not knowing where I was, so bewildered had the experience of the night made me, until I finally arrived here." The curate, after reciting the account of his thrilling adventure, which appeared so unreal, continued: "Father, what makes the thing more strange, is my escape. Who could the old man be?"

"My young friend, the artist, who saved us both last night."

"Who is this young man, Father?"

"Why, Louis James."

"Now I remember the face—an excellent detective."

"He has done nobly, George. Twice within twenty-four hours he has thwarted that wretched villain's design of slaughtering us both."

"Why not place the case in his hands?"

"A capital idea, my son; one of my best friends—shrewd and capable; that's what we'll do. Moreover, I have learned from Sister Marguerite that he is admired by the members of that household, and will be just the man on whom we can rely with all confi-

dence. A wise suggestion. Louis James will do exactly." "Jeremy, Jeremy," shouted the rector. The sexton stalked in as if he were an English bailiff, so great was his dignity. "You are to bring this note to Mr. James," said the pastor, as he handed him a piece of paper on which he had written a few lines. Jeremy rather reluctantly walked out of the room, observing which, Father Rogers addressed him: "Jeremy, are you feeling ill?"

"Faith, I'm feeling bad, yer riverence; how could I feel otherwise, when ye say I'm always fightin'."

"What's this all about. Have you been carousing?"

"Not I, Father; not a drop have I touched in a week, and all the satisfaction I get for me temperance is that you say I'm all fight."

"You are mistaken, Jeremy."

"Well, then, yer riverence, you'll have to speak plainer the next time, as I'm gettin' slow of hearin'. Good-bye."

It was approaching noon, and the coaches were assembling round the Yellow Manse to attend the funeral of the lady who had been killed, as Jeremy left to find the artist. The lanky, narrow-backed undertaker, who had attended the funerals of the rich for many a year throughout the city, put in an appearance. His first official act was to open the great double door of the mansion that had been closed as long as the oldest neighbor could remember. The shutters, too, were pushed back on their rusty hinges,

and magnificently embroidered lace curtains fell over the plate glass windows. The old Manse appeared pleasant. People within began to stir, and the ever-ready sightseers were present in large numbers. A hundred masons strong, with short white aprons, marched down the street, accompanied by a band of music playing a tune that was in little sympathy with stern death. The sound of the music and the noise of parade which attended it, attracted many more to the residence of the Omars. The Masons formed a double line, through which the corpse was to pass. Nearly one hundred carriages, filled with all the lodges of the city, were blocked together in front of the mansion. In the meantime, while the preparations were being made, Father Rogers watched the proceedings from the parlor window, while Jeremy and Louis where occupied in as favorable positions on the floor above. The young artist had his brushes and his palette, ready to paint.

"Is it meself yer going to draw? Oh, how foolish I'm to be thinking so." Jeremy touched his sides, and began to laugh heartily at the expense of the artist.

"Shurely, if Molly were to see me likeness, she'd caress it forever (because there would be no one to stop her). It's not meself that yer after, me friend, but Lady Angelina," and again the good-natured man roared aloud as he saw Louis blush. Continuing in his usual go-ahead fashion, with a huge smile beaming on his frank, open countenance, he rejoined:

"Faith, Miss Angelina is a pretty sweetheart." The artist thought best to put a stop to the cajolery of the Irishman, for, once started with his fun-making, he could not be easily stopped.

"Hush, man, I have no sweetheart."

"Well, if yer haven't, then my Molly is altogether mistaken, and I'm innocent of accusing a man not guilty."

"Who is this Molly you speak of?"

"Why, my Molly, of coorse, the intended of your humble friend, Jeremy. Your honor, that's the lady that wouldn't tell a lie for any body, and she says that you are in love with the beautiful Miss Angelina, the infidel's daughter."

"Where did she get this news?"

"Direct, I suppose, from the lady herself; or maybe she overheard the ugly old doctor cursing you."

"Will you inquire, Jeremy, whether or not she got it from Miss Angelina's own lips?"

"Oh, didn't I know from your own words that you thought a dale of her. You were never done speaking of her charms, and any man that's always praisin' a woman, that same lassy is his own. Now, Louis, I'm only speaking before marriage, because after it, he generally regrets, too late, that he didn't remain a bachelor."

The artist was deeply meditating, and he did not respond. Occasionally he had contrived to visit the lady who had met the sad accident, in the hope that he might obtain an interview with the maid of the

Manse, Miss Angelina. He had never spoken to her, as this had been expressly forbidden him to do. He saw her now and then, as she fluttered into the room in which he was accustomed to meet her mother. Sometimes she looked at him with a half-piteous glance ; then again, she would hold her eyes cast down upon the ground, as if afraid to look him squarely in the face. "Did she love him?" That was the question that perplexed the artist, and it was such considerations that prevented him from paying attention to the last remarks of Jeremy.

"Now, me boy, none of yer blarney; ain't ye in love with Angelina?"

There was no answer.

"There is no use of fooling one who has been in the toils of Cupid many times."

The artist broke out into a merry laugh.

"Oh, I don't mane to say that I've been married, divorced, a dozen times; but simply, that I've been rejected, jilted, and the dear knows what, for me proposals; so at last I concluded that I'll never take the fatal step till I'm asked first. Take me advice: you are still very young; don't ask Miss Angelina's hand too soon, as she has many suitors."

"Oh, sir, you startle me with your information. Will you kindly let me know who they are?"

"Too numerous to mention, me boy. There's the old gent of the house, the doctor, and meself, if ever I loose Molly, and nearly everybody that sees her."

"You are aware that I am in love with Miss Angelina?

"I didn't doubt it in the least, but I thought to assist you.

"How, Jeremy? Do, I beg you. I am in love."

"And I am, too, me son, so take me into your confidence, and be assured that I will make it aisy for you.

Louis gave him his hand. "Jeremy, you must act cautiously, for that house is as full of secrets as a Mason's lodge."

"I'm thinkin' it is a lodge for Masons, and the quicker I'm called to unroost some of them the better."

A moment later the artist sought to sound the sexton, but he refused to be side-tracked.

"Arrah, me friend Louis, yer bating around the bush with as much clumsiness as the old goat of me mother's that went larking about the clothes-line till he hanged himself."

The young man felt that he was cornered. To attempt to draw out of the alliance that he had made with the Irishman was to entangle himself all the more. The conversation of the two friends could not be continued for the present. The funeral cortege was about to start. Down the steps came men wearing different insignias, representative of the various societies to which they belonged. The Masons still kept their post at the iron gate. Ten tall, pagan-like priests bearing large books, led the procession. They wore long scarlet robes trailing to the ground, and

small, cone-shaped turbans of the same color. Six walked slowly in front, while the remaining four supported a platform, upon which was seated an old man with white hair and beard and with features as red as a North American Indian. His attire was superb. A long white silken gown, decorated with the choicest flowers of the tropics, concealed his person. His sandals were ornamented with jewels and gold. A beautifully colored kerchief closed round his bronzed neck, and with head uplifted, his little red eyes peering anxiously at the vast number of spectators, he was borne away. Next in line were the various other branches of secret orders. Then came the carriages in a long file. The hearse, plumed with black and white, and drawn by six fine white horses, stood at the entrance. Soon the lanky undertaker appeared, and showing the emotion he felt on such solemn occasions, with arms crossed, walked before the casket. Two tiny children dressed in white, held the first handles of the casket, while four young ladies clad in black and heavily veiled, supported the four remaining ones. Slowly the procession moved away. Above the dull crash of the lodges' band could be heard the sobs of the weeping pall-bearers. A great throng of people followed the strange funeral procession to the grave. Business was suspended as it passed through the city. All eyes gazed at the individual being borne away on the throne. The mysterious red men shouted a melancholy strain to their "Allah" that no one understood. Ths cemetery was at last reached. The men

in red stood round their white-robed chieftain. The Masons arranged themselves in double file, while the crowd that was in the rear surged up as best they could to catch a glimpse of the grave. The pall-bearers, weeping bitterly, laid down their burden gently, while the red men sang and recited in turn passages from their wonderful books. The grave-diggers having put their straps around the casket, slowly lowered it to its last resting place. All was quiet now, save the sighs of the mourners. As soon as the earth had been piled upon the grave, the tallest of the girls knelt down, and making the sign of the cross, she began to recite aloud the "Hail Mary." It was responded to by the Catholics, who, hearing the tone of their sweetest prayer, knelt down and joined in their anthem of love. The faces of the stiff Masons were indescribable. They made grimaces that men alone of their stamp are capable of making. The red men raised loud shrieks to their "Allah," and wound up their monotonous chorus by shouting at the top of their voices, "God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet." During the uproar the children in white grasped the hand of the kneeling lady, and recited the prayers after her. The rage of the white-robed chieftain knew no bounds. He rushed to where the three were kneeling and motioned them to rise, and all the while he uttered terrible oaths and curses. The little ones clutched more closely with fright the skirts of the lady, who continued her prayers without noticing his menaces. The fierce chieftain turned to the Masons

and addressed them in some unspeakable dialect. Forth from the ranks came the blear-eyed doctor, and with the sweetest smile that he was capable of resurrecting to his scowling visage, approached the maiden and whispered something in her ear. He stepped back, and the lady rose to her feet, the little ones still holding fast to her. The doctor laughed outright at his success. He approached her a second time—now extending his arm. She lifted her veil from off her beautiful face, and with a scornful look, shouted: "Beware, villain!" The exclamation startled the doctor, who, abashed with the rebuff, slunk a few feet backward. His pride was keenly wounded. He had never before heard a rebuke given by a woman with such expression. He was astonished all the more when he realized his position. He glanced at his brother Masons, but they had only smiles of derision depicted on their faces. He gazed sarcastically at the crowd; they simply ignored him. Neither did the "high priest" seem pleased. The doctor again moved forward, and with a still deeper show of graciousness, offered to conduct the motionless lady to her carriage. She disdained to acquiesce to his demand. "Angelina, Angelina," he implored; but seeing his endeavors fruitless to lead her away from the grave, he began to curse the people that were praying near by. The members of the lodges approved of his vile remarks by their murmurings. When he had concluded insulting them, he went again to the young lady's side and gave her a rude

push. There was a cry of shame from the crowd; he heeded it not, and repeated his unkind action. The young woman, recovering herself as he was about to urge her still more violently, reprimanded him and moved briskly to the carriage. There was a shout of exultation from the citizens. The doctor made a rush for her, but the foot of a young man shot out as quick as lightning, and the baffled physician went on all fours to the ground. A fight seemed imminent between the secret organizations and the people, but several policemen dispersed the gathering, and the funeral cortege made its way homeward. When the funeral had moved from the Yellow Manse, the artist set about to complete the picture; the outlines he had sketched as the burial party went by. Jeremy being of a more curious character than his friend, followed in the rank and file of the neighbors that attended the burial. When Louis had completed the sketch, Jeremy entered, and the two proceeded to the floor below, whence the priests were watching all that had occurred. Father Rogers answered the knock, and seeing the artist, greeted him warmly. Having introduced him to the curate, who thanked him heartily for his assistance the night previous, he was about to close the door when Jeremy pleaded for admittance.

"Fathers, there's no use of humbugging about the business at all, at all. I know a thing or two about these premises, and first and foremost, I want to know if I'll be of any sarvice to you in learning anything about the place beyant."

The priests were astounded at the remarks of the Irishman, and they knew not what to say in reply. When no answer was forthcoming, Jeremy continued: "Oh, yer riverences both, don't try to decave me; I know yer purpose in calling Louis to your assistance."

"You broke your trust then, sir," replied the pastor, sharply, "and you are not worthy of our confidence."

"Then, musha, I'll lave; but first, ye know yerself that I could not read the note, and besides, I'm sure that if I don't know more about the Yellow Manse and its wonders than all of you put together—"

"How did you get your knowledge?" remarked the rector, in a conciliatory tone of voice.

"Why, I'm dead in love with the Frinch cook—Molly Liffey."

"Are you admitted into the house?"

"The same as yerself and me friend Louis—just get to the hall room and no further; but I have a great cravin' to take a look around the place, and I'm just thinkin' of goin' on an expedition, and if I'll be of any sarvice—"

"Oh, certainly you will," replied the pastor.

"Well, then, let us understand each other, and not be working in the dark."

"That is the proper thing," rejoined the curate.

The clergymen knew that Jeremy was quick-witted. He understood something of the case, and besides, being upright and honest to a fault, he moreover belonged to the immediate household, and, therefore,

why not recognize his ability? The priest from that moment resolved to accept the help of the good-natured Irishman. Beginning at once in his new office, Jeremy asked: "Say, Louis, have ye finished the picture?"

"Yes; you will find it on the easel, upstairs."

The sexton went up, and in a minute brought it into the room, and lo! there was the perfect likeness of the white-robed chieftain. Father Rogers stared at it for some moments, while Father Delon first glanced nervously at the picture and then at the pastor.

"This is the same midnight caller," exclaimed the rector in astonishment. "This is he," replied the French priest, trembling.

"Louis' father-in-law," ejaculated the Irishman, and the same lad that had us in a peck of trouble. The thoughtful face of the artist became suffused with blushes.

"The rascal was nearly stirrin' up a riot at the funeral to-day."

"A riot!" the three exclaimed, simultaneously.

"At least a bit of a tragedy. Shure Miss Angelina knelt down to say a prayer for the poor departed lady's soul, and that old gray-headed thief raised a great hullabaloo. He cursed and swore until another, as big and homely as himself—the doctor—came to his assistance and ordered the girl to get off her knees. He treated her so brutally that her patience was exhausted, and she was forced to reprimand him pub-

licly and seek refuge in flight. But the red-headed butcher followed her as she ran to the coach, and I think he would have killed her, when I put out me foot and I gave him the soundest fall he ever got."

"Did he recognize you?" queried the curate, anxiously.

"He did; for he swore to get even with me, but the crowd stuck to me, and if all the Masons that ever swore their bloodiest oaths to get square that day, it would be all the one way and we on top."

"Was there any more disturbance?"

"No; the officers arrived and broke up the whole meetin'."

"Who was the lady?" inquired the curate.

"None other than Miss Angelina."

"Miss Angelina and the doctor again. Ha! I will avenge that outrage," spoke the artist. "Are you certain that it was Miss Angelina?"

"Positively, Louis. She prayed, too; is she not an unbeliever?"

"Infidel or not, yer riverence, she said as nice a prayer as either of us ever said."

"Father," spoke Louis, addressing the curate, "Miss Angelina is, on the contrary, I am inclined to think, a good Catholic."

"A Catholic!" responded the priest.

"Yes; but a prisoner in the Yellow Manse. I live only to rescue her from the hands of her base keeper."

"Well, before you are able to do this, we must get

in possession of that villain's secret," said the sexton, pointing at the picture.

"There is the Mystery of the Yellow Manse!"

All gazed upon the white-robed chieftain with bronzed skin and little red eyes and stiff, wrinkled cheeks and brow. A finer group could not have been gathered together in one sitting. Father Delon and Louis sat side by side. Their faces bore the same expression. Hair, eyes and figure were alike, so much so, that any one not acquainted with them might take them for twins. The head and hair of the pastor were not unlike in some respects to the picture, which he scanned with eager attention. One bore an amiable and friendly mien, the other had a hardened look. Jeremy, too, was of a very presentable appearance. Not so handsome as either the curate or the artist, or as homely as the stern red man, he had what people might term, a passible look. His ruddy cheeks told the happy warmth of the soul that lay beneath them. He was something over thirty, although at first sight you would take him to be more advanced. He was of medium size, inclined to be stout, and well proportioned—"just such a man as any comely girl might take a liking to," as he expressed it himself. When they remained sometime in silence, he began anew the conversation. "There is no time to be lost, good gentlemen three, and if we wish to save the inmates of that house yonder from a miserable life here, and maybe, hereafter, let us set about our task at once."

"As it is growing late, dear friends," said Father Rogers, "Father Delon and I have urgent duties to perform. We will think, in the meanwhile, on some line of action, and to-morrow the strange things of to-day may, God willing, be brought to light."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ADVENTURES OF JEREMY OWENS.

IT was nearly noon when the artist made his appearance on the following day. His dress was of the gentleman's caste. He wore a tight-fitting black suit of tasteful pattern. His features were never more beautiful. A pleasant smile was on his dull red lips instead of the angry look he wore when he heard of the doctor's attack on Miss Angelina.

"Why, any girl in the land would be proud of you, if it were only for your good looks."

This was the sexton's compliment as he ushered the artist into the little parlor where the clergymen were awaiting his presence.

"We are here again. Let us begin business at once," remarked the curate.

"Sister Marguerite is still missing; she will be of value to us," added the pastor. Jeremy disappeared, and in a few minutes returned, in company with the good nun. Her disposition was altogether changed. Her cheeks had faded to an ashy color. The spark-

ling light of those large brown eyes that greeted friend and stranger in days gone by with joy, had likewise departed, and she looked haggard and care-worn. Her condition drew a sigh from the rector as he beheld her. Sister Marguerite, it is true, had never been herself since the night she was aroused to attend her dying father ; but the past week she was completely cast down. The presence of Miss Angelina at the burial of Omar's wife, and her connection with the "Yellow Manse," excited her greatly. She painfully awaited to hear the secret of her father's death, but more especially, to ascertain what had become of her family since she had seen them last. Her voice was very weak as she greeted each in turn. How different from the melodious peal that so often rang out with angelic sweetness in the holy precincts of the cloister. She, alas ! was only a shadow of her former self as she sat down in the chair offered her by Jeremy.

"You are unwell to-day, Sister. Has that imaginary mind of yours led you astray again ?" asked the pastor.

"Perhaps," she answered, distractedly, "but I must find some interpretation to my fears. You know that if they were alone in the imagination, I would not worry so much about them ; remember my father's sad death,—this is not an hallucination. Oh, can no one assist me out of my difficulty !"

"Yes, Sister, I will for one. Father Rogers at last has resolved to trust me, and when I keep

away from drink, I'm as faithful as an angel to duty. Faith, you can believe I'll help you, good mother, and I'll clear away the trouble that has lain upon your heart for the five years gone by."

Jeremy thus replied to the sympathetic plea of the nun with that open-hearted earnestness that gave him the title of the good-natured man.

"Jeremy, I could always trust you, but in the present instance, I am forced by peculiar circumstances to refuse your assistance."

"No, Sister, Jeremy is in our employ," replied the pastor.

"A detective. Then we need your aid."

"Then I'm at your disposal at all risks ; but, Sister, it seems to me, as far as I can find out, that some ghost-like dream has followed you about for a long period. I see no reason why you should fret your precious life away thinking of what might have happened to your family. Father Delon has an almost identical tale to tell, but he prays and hopes that all will turn out right."

"But did he find his father with the terrible declaration of 'Robbery, divorce, and infidelity,' on his dying lips, following in the awful wake of that tell-tale murder. I cannot stand the suspense that has hung over me since I obtained the truth. Each of these monsters, I fear, has been an evil factor in my family's ruin. O great God! will none solve the mystery of my family's whereabouts?"

Having concluded this pitiful story, and throwing

up her hands, she shrieked aloud. It was some minutes before she regained her self-control.

"Sister, I'm thinking with his riverence, that you'll have to restrain your mind a bit, and don't leave it run away with your reason."

"Oh, you don't understand my position. You speak too quickly. Explain the dying words of my father. What do you mean? Are they a delusion? Now swear to aid me, or depart forever from my sight."

These brief sentences showed the terrible earnestness of the nun. Too much time had been lost, and practically nothing was done to relieve her mind.

"Swear to me, if you are my friend," said the Sister, pointing to the Irishman.

"Well, surely I'm your friend, and I swear to assist you. I know full well that havoc has been raised in your family."

A copious flood of tears flowed down the cheeks of the heart-broken woman, and Jeremy, seeing her weeping, turned away, for he, too, felt a large tear rising in his eye that he could not keep back.

"Well, Sister, hope and trust that God will change those very troubles that now so sorely grieve you, into the choicest blessings. You have me oath, Sister."

"And mine also," said the artist, rising to his feet. "Promise me that you will bear up under the trials that are weighing you down, and may God reward our endeavors."

"I promise, Mr. James, and from the bottom of my heart I thank both of you gentlemen for your kind-

ness. May our Divine Lord and His Blessed Mother protect you both from the machinations of the Evil One." The meeting was adjourned. The clergymen repaired to their pastoral work, while Sister Marguerite, in company with her companion, walked slowly toward the convent, Jeremy following in their footsteps. The artist remained, to put the finishing touches to his picture. When the sexton proceeded some distance across the lawn, he stopped: "Sister, may I ask you one question?"

"Certainly."

"Was the lady that brought you to the bedside of your father named Omar?"

"Omar? That name is familiar. Omar—a prince whom I nursed at the fall of Moscow."

"A Turkish prince, Sister?"

"Born and bred in Egypt, I think, though he had some claim on Turkey. He was grievously wounded, and being touched by his afflictions, I took particular care of him. When he recovered he gave me this, and she drew forth a many colored kerchief, and said: "Sister, this may be of some worth to you some day; it is of immense value; treasure it carefully."

"Hump! and did he speak Turkish, French, or English?"

"In broken French—a knowledge of which he had acquired in the army of my country."

"Then you are of French birth? That's all. What you refused to tell me the other evening I have now. Good-bye."

The Irishman sought the company of his friend the artist, to lay immediate plans for operation. When Sister Marguerite stepped into the community room, all the Sisters had gathered there to spend their usual evening recreation. Everyone saw at once the wholesome change in their beloved superioress. The melancholy gloom had faded from her brow as in a pleasing tone of conversation she greeted them. One talked to the other of the improved condition of their mother, and this formed the principal topic of the evening's conversation, as each one was busily engaged at some light sewing. When there was a brief interval of silence, Sister Innocentia, a small, sweet-faced nun, remarked: "Why, Sister Marguerite, you now look as happy as of old. You have been sad for a long time, and now that you have become once more joyful, we, too, who have been partakers of your sorrow, may now share your joy."

"Yes, my child, the nuns have given me great consolation in my trouble, and being partakers of the sadness, they ought now be sharers of my present disposition of mind."

This was the signal for that kind of merriment which a convent and light-hearted Sisters are alone capable of affording. In a moment Sister Innocentia was at the piano playing all the lively pieces that were in her repertoire. Some of the Sisters sang, too, and so sweetly that bigots, had they heard them, would not say they were prisoners by force. The enjoyment passed that evening so quickly that the

nuns wondered if recreation were really over when the bell rang for night prayers. Everybody enjoyed the music and singing so much, and none more than Sister Marguerite. In the chapel she poured out the most heartfelt thanksgiving she had ever made to God, for the young men who had sworn to try with all their might to solve the mystery, in which, she felt, that all who were dear to her were in some way implicated. No sooner did her thoughts linger on the case, than she began to grow sad. "O God!" she repeated in the words expressed by the prophet: "O, all you that pass my way, see if there is any sorrow equal to my sorrow." She tried to bear up under the severe trials and temptations that pursued her. Yes ; she had been pleasant to the Sisters a few minutes at least, and that one consoling thought rushed through her fevered brain as she walked to her room after night prayers. She wished none of her dear children to share with her the cup of sorrow that she was destined to drink. "O Lord!" she moaned in the anguish of grief that overwhelmed her. She forgot it was the will of God that she should suffer thus. Her voice was silent, but her agitated bosom beat violently with the conflict which she was compelled to endure. That holy woman who had witnessed the slaughter of battle in its cruelest form, was now destined to feel, if not to view, a fiercer contest raging within her own bosom. Hastily she arose from her knees, and flinging herself across the bed, moaned bitterly. Soon she fell asleep. Images

of her poverty-stricken family rose before her, and their emaciated faces showed the sufferings they had undergone. Heavily chained, they lay on a cold dungeon floor, with no light save the flickering beam of an old oil lamp. Her darling mother, whom she had not seen for years, was there, with a sad and worn countenance depicting her wretchedness. Beside her was her father, cold in death, and a bright little child kneeling by him with her hands folded in prayer. Oh, in death she had found them united, and she was glad even of this last boon. Then the scenes vanished, and the old cabin loomed up before her. It was the one in which her poor father died. She saw the child enter and sit by the bedside of the old, worn-out soldier, but now her mother was absent. "Oh, my father," she wept, hysterically, "they have wronged you and mother; but God shall amply reward your sufferings hereafter." "Angelina," spoke the dying man, "send for Sister Marguerite, the Superioress of St. Mary's Convent. Go quickly, before those villains kill me." The Sister hearing these remarks, awoke in a fright; but seeing that it was all a dream, blessed herself, and slept the same disturbed sleep again. She was once more standing by her father's bed, and it was that moment in which he gasped those terrible words that worked so much horror in the life of the good nun. His eyes were fixed upon her, but his words were inaudible, and he fell back, dead. In came the mysterious red men, who, chanting a strange pæan, took hold of the body

and bore it away. Thus the superioress passed the night in a dreadful state of suspense and misgiving. The bell summoned the Sisters to rise. Sister Innocentia entered the room and saw at once that Sister Marguerite was ill. "What brought you here, my child, at this hour?"

"Dear mother," answered the nun, "I heard you moaning, and I thought that you might need assistance."

Sister Marguerite smiled benignly. "My child, I have only been dreaming."

"Dreams disappear when one awakens, but yours never. Who are the red men you speak of?"

"My daughter, you astonish me with your sayings."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the little nun, "I think it is just the opposite. Come now, Sister, tell me your dream; you must have dreamt direful things; you are in trouble, I know."

"Hush, dear, dreams are fables, and fables, as the old proverb goes, are lies."

"Why not consider them in the same light, Sister? With you they are a fanciful reality. Who now, I pray, was the charming lady with whom you were conversing?"

"I don't remember. Perhaps it was with the lady of the Manse."

"Strange, indeed, to have dreamt of that horrid house. It is really too bad that such a refined person as Miss Angelina dwells there."

"Ah, my child, she cannot help it—being detained by force."

"A prisoner? I thought as much, else she would not have remained willingly with those red men who reside there."

"Red men! Who are they, child?"

"Maybe the ones you have dreamt about."

The face of the elder nun grew thoughtful; there was a deep touch of pathos in her inquiry: "Do they abide permanently in the Yellow Manse?"

"I am led to believe so from the remarks of my brother Louis."

"And pray, dear, may I ask, where he got such information?"

"Presumably from the lady who met with the accident a few days ago."

"I was not aware that visitors were ever admitted, the place seems so deserted."

"A retired lot of people inhabit that dwelling. It is frequented by members of lodges when all honest people are in bed. Their business may be legitimate, but, Sister Marguerite, evil deeds are done under the cover of darkness."

"One question, and I am done, Sister Innocentia. How came your brother to be acquainted with the lady you mentioned?"

"I believe he rescued her from some peril or other, for which she was ever afterward grateful. No more about the haunted house or its people. Tell me the name of the old soldier in your dream, and

the meaning of those words: 'Murder, robbery, divorce and infidelity.'"

"The old gentleman was my father, and, oh! the rest is a dark mystery."

The bell again sounded—this time to summon the nuns to the chapel. Day was quietly breaking in the eastern sky as the two Sisters walked side by side, crestfallen, to attend the morning prayers of the community. In the rectory the priests slept soundly, while Jeremy and the artist were discussing plans in the parlor of the rectory without a thought of rest.

The Angelus is pealing its mighty vibrations from out the belfry of St. Mary's; the clear air of the morning carries the tones over the far-extending meadows, where close by the sail of the lone fisherman's smack lies becalmed in the broad, glassy bay. The faithful are bending down to offer their labor of the day to their good God above, who repays every action done in His honor, a hundred-fold. Along the outskirts of the city the farmers are ploughing. Spring has come to enrich the land. The birds are warbling their sweetest notes in the tall trees that nestle by the side of the sleepy old river. Children in the large rookeries of flats are awake from their slumbers, and strike up the same monotonous chorus of shrieks and yells—ever going from morning to night—scarcely less discordant to the ears of the horny-handed laborer than the screeching whistles of the neighboring shops. Quiet reigns in the convent, save the prayer-lisping lips of the Sisters who are attending the Holy Sacri-

fice which Father Rogers is offering up. Jeremy and Louis are devout worshippers in the church, where the curate is raising aloft to God the self-same sacrifice which is everywhere being offered "from the rising to the setting of the sun." They have formed their line of battle, and are praying to the God of armies for strength to cope successfully with the "Mystery of the Yellow Manse." This strange residence has even a more dismal appearance to-day than it ever before presented. Probably because the window shutters and the great oak door, which had been opened the day previous for the first time in the memory of many citizens, were now closed as tightly as if they were never more to open. Like the temple of Janus, the old manor stood bold and defiant, but the war was to be waged within. No crowd surrounded the building. Occasionally a passer-by looked up at its unique frame, stopped a moment, shook his head, and went on and wondered why so strange a place was built. The triangular window offered no view. The arrival of a short, stout man at the tall iron gate at the entrance attracted no attention. From the links on his breast, it was evident that he was a full-fledged Mason. We might as well say that this short individual was no other than the comely Irishman—whose physiognomy, under the artist's touch, was unrecognizable except to himself and his friend. Not even the priests were informed of the adventure which Jeremy was to make. Louis had his doubts of the success of the scheme,

but it had been proposed by Jeremy himself, and with so much ardor that the artist finally resolved to encourage him.

"Musha, there must be a way out of gettin' the sacret, and the sacret way, I'm thinkin', is the better. And, wirra, me good friend Louis, if I never return, believe me, I procured the sacret, though it died untold upon me lips."

This was the farewell parting as Jeremy took a circuitous route about the city until he arrived at the Yellow Manse. As he opened the gate the Irishman was the personification of an admirable looking Mason, if such a being can be considered. Unaccustomed to finery in dress, the tight-fitting black suit of the artist gave him an air of the sacret-keeper, as Jeremy thought. His red cheeks were shaded to a sallow color, his eyebrows dyed a deep black, and the dark moustache concealing his cleanly shaven lip gave him a stern expression. Hurriedly he ascended the steps and rang the bell violently, impatiently waiting for admittance. It was opened by a small, wiry maid, who ushered the visitor into a handsome sitting room, and closing the door quickly, in a polite manner, asked: "Your name, please?"

"Och, never mind that; I'm on sacret business (and he winked—which acknowledgment Jeremy considered sufficient recognizance for any woman), and sure I want to consult the boss of the place."

"You mean the Rabbi."

"That's it just."

"The formalities of this house require that you give me your name. Who are you; or take the other alternative and leave."

"Oh, begorrah, it's a fine thing to be ordered out of a gentleman's house, and I a gentleman at that. Stand on your ceremonies and dignity, and on your uppers for that matter, but don't you know me yerself, Molly?"

The girl started back in surprise as she recognized the voice of her lover.

Oh, Jeremy Owens, what brought you here? Begone quickly, your life is in danger."

"Hush, darlint, you wouldn't make such a fuss if I were the biggest rascal in the place. I'm on business by order of all that's holy, and now that you know who I am, name your servant anything that will afford him a show to have a chat with the Rabbi."

"Gracious heavens, Jeremy, your life would be destroyed should you be recognized."

"Whist, Molly O, when me own darlint girl don't know her own lover, how will the Rabbi himself know me, when I never knew him. Give me a name, quick."

"I feel uneasy about you, Jeremy, but you might pass for Stephen Long the minister, with whom the Rabbi is little acquainted."

"Excellent, me fine girl, I'll pass for a dominie any day; and when I survey meself calmly, I feel that I'm like his riverence—the parson."

"Alright, Jeremy dear, I will announce your pres-

ence, but pray hard and fast as I fear that all will not turn out well."

The Irishman did not neglect this last advice. He prayed, while his knees quaked at the thought of the perils of his adventure; but he had resolved to do or to die, and he felt that he was prepared, if he were compelled to suffer the extreme penalty. While thus planing how to act, his sweetheart came to the door: "The Rabbi isn't at home, Jeremy," making a profound obeisance for her lover to depart.

"Well, you are then, Alannah, and I'm going to await his arrival by having a chat with you, asthore." The Irishman forgot himself and laughed aloud.

"Hush, Jeremy, you are lost. Go out this instant. Oh, do go!" and she grasped him by the arm. "They come; they come. Flee for your life!"

Jeremy broke from her as he heard footsteps hurrying down in the hall above, and secreted himself behind the door. Right opposite to where the sexton was hiding another door flew open, and in darted the doctor, his hair rising from off his knotty brow like an anarchist.

"What is the trouble?"

"Only a stranger sought to enter."

"No lies, Miss; you are in my power. Tell me the truth, or I'll pluck your cursed tongue from its roots."

He advanced toward the thoroughly frightened girl, prancing around her, while awaiting an answer.

"Speak quick, or I'll wreak vengeance upon you!"

The servant stood motionless. The doctor grew frantic as he saw that she was determined to keep silence. Advancing a step nearer, he struck her a cruel blow across the face that laid the poor creature prostrate. Meanwhile Jeremy was boiling with rage at the impudence and effrontery of the physician. He had been cautioned to restrain his temper at all hazards, and engage is no scuffle unless his life was seriously threatened. His blood, nevertheless, ran unchecked in his veins to his head, and he forgot all the prudence and caution in which he had been schooled by the shrewd Louis. He listened a moment, and hearing the sobs of the girl, peeped cautiously from behind his covert. She was still weeping when the doctor picked her up, and once more questioned the half-dazed domestic.

"Who was that visitor?"

"Jeremy Owens, his riverence's sarvant, you scoundrel, and take that in the bargin'," yelled the sexton, as he hit him a box with his clenched fist that made him stagger and fall in a heap in the corner, unconscious. Molly screamed and fainted. Her cry and the fall of the doctor brought several lodge members into the room in a moment. The physician lay groaning on the floor, while Jeremy was busily occupied fanning Molly, as unconcernedly as if he had not been a factor in the fight at all.

"What is the matter?" shouted all in unison, and observing the stranger, the leader demanded, savagely: "Who are you?"

Jeremy was now cool. "A brother Mason," was the response.

"What's the name?"

"Stephen Long, the minister."

All the brothers approached him in turn and shook his hand with that peculiar grip that Mason's monopolize.

"Gentlemen, my arrival was opportune. Had I not arrived this instant, the doctor and the servant would have fared badly at the hands of that confounded countryman of mine—the papist sexton."

"What!" interrupted a long, lanky, crooked-legged brother who did business as Simon Lowe, money lender and broker, "has that dare-devil entered here?"

"Yes; and he came near paying the last act of his folly."

While Jeremy and the Jew conversed together on the peculiar incident, several others took hold of the limp form of the physician and carried it into a spacious room at the end of the hallway. Molly having recovered from the shock, and being of that quick turn of mind for which her race is noted, acted her part nicely.

"Fool, indeed, is that Irishman; he thinks I love him. Let him beware in the future!"

Molly left the room and Jeremy did likewise, at the invitation of his newly-acquainted brother. Jeremy turned pale as he saw the doctor lying on a fancifully carved table. He was escorted to his side by the Jew. He felt his pulse, and hoped the red-headed scoundrel

would take a long sleep. "What if he recognized his disguise?" Did the doctor know the minister Long? If so, then poor Jeremy would sink to rest without having accomplished anything. This thought worried the Irishman most. He would gladly sacrifice his life, if by so doing he could save the curate and Sister Marguerite from the cares that were slowly but surely consuming their vitality away. He lived only for them. Such a resounding whack as he had administered to the physician was not to be gotten rid of very easily. When the practitioner of medicine found that he was still in the land of the living, he swore vengeance on the head of the Irish papist. When Jeremy saw that he was not recognized, he chukled to himself with delight. The doctor complained of his head and side, and he was helped to a small room downstairs and put to bed. Now that the man he feared most was removed, the sexton mingled more sociably with his fellows. He conversed freely with all, meanwhile taking observant glances at the surroundings. The room in which he found himself was, to say the least, handsome. Walls finished smoothly as glassware, decorated with the finest oil paintings. A large golden lamp, in the shape of a dove, lighted up the room. Chairs of yellow-colored oak with white silk coverings gave to the place a cheerful aspect. A large mirror framed with ivory and gold showed to advantage the other furniture of the room, without making it necessary for Jeremy to peer around too much. The carpet was

of a light-blue velvet pattern. In the centre of the room, on one side of a finely carved table of mahogany, was a magnificent pipe organ, and on the other a revolving book stand filled with many choice volumes. All these Jeremy observed at a glance. His thoughts were concerned about the precarious condition in which he found himself rather than on the beautiful place. He had chosen a bad night for such a daring adventure, but it was now too late to withdraw. He learned that a committee of his fellow Masons had been appointed to draw up suitable resolutions of regret to be presented to the Rabbi in memory of his deceased wife. If there were great dangers in entering the Manse on such a night, these were counterbalanced by the many advantages to be gained, if all worked satisfactorily. His heart beat rapidly as he learned that the minister was on the committee. What was now to be done? It was only a question of time before his identity would be revealed. He was at his wit's end. An idea came to his mind. He would answer the bell and put the minister off with some well devised strategy; if he failed in this, he would have recourse to some desperate means. He morever placed a great deal of confidence in Molly to assist him. Accordingly, when the meeting was called to order, Jeremy congratulated himself, as the brothers filed into the room accompanied by the red men, that the minister was absent. Suddenly a mysterious door opened, and there, behold! Jeremy was face to face with the Rabbi. He approached slowly, and with

well measured words addressed his assembled comrades: "Gentlemen, I will be unable to attend the secret conclave this evening, as pressing business demands my presence in the office. In my absence as chairman, if the Reverend Long is here, let him approach and act in that capacity."

The Irishman was nonplussed in the very beginning of action by this act of courtesy. He arose, and the Rabbi having retired, all eyes were fixed on him. He was terribly confused, so much so that the members noticed it; but deeming it nothing else than the high honor shown him, they applauded him vigorously as he was about to decline. Against every protest of his unfitness, he was escorted to the large soft chair which was placed on a platform that stood in the centre of the assembly. He was well-nigh giving up in despair as he thought upon carrying on a meeting, the nature of which he had never before heard. Of course he was wise enough not to use any form of prayer, and his first official act was to rap violently on the table for order with his gavel, though the assemblage was as still as Quakers. His fellow-brothers looked at him, and he wondered what he ought to do next. Finally, after much deliberation he arose, and with grace and suavity of manner—which were greatly affected—addressed them: "Comrades all, proceed with the business before the house."

"I arise to a point of order, Mr. Chairman," interrupted one; "the first business before us is for you to state the reason why we are assembled here."

"Sustained, good brother; please state the object," said the sexton, naively. Highly flattered with the compliment, the brother again took the floor, and with due respect rejoined: "The purpose of this meeting is to adopt resolutions of regret on the death of Madam Omar—the estimable wife of our Supreme Master."

No sooner had he ended than the door of the chamber opened with a bang, and lo! there was the minister. It would be hard to describe the various expressions of surprise and anger that took possession of the Masons, and to depict the glance of the Irishman as his eyes rested on the dumbfounded mien of the parson. Hardly a particle of difference could be observed between them. The one size in height and breadth, each having a moustache tastefully waxed, and both having dark hair and eyes—surely one was the double of the other. It was apparent to all that something was wrong. They seemed to be twins; but the principals, as they gazed fiercely at each other, knew this was not the case. Undoubtedly Jeremy would have been satisfied to call him brother in the present instance, but the parson objected to this in a low tone which the acute ears of the sexton overheard. Then broke out a tumultous insurrection, which for a time threatened to cause bloodshed.

"You scoundrel!" shouted the Irishman at the top of his voice, "why have you dared to enter these sacred precincts thus disguised!"

"Villain," retorted the dominie when he heard his

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personality denied, "you are a spy. I know the track of your tongue. Jeremy Owens, you have—" He did not finish his sentence, when the doctor, clad in his night attire, rushed into the council. He was like one beside himself with rage. He heard the name Owens mentioned, and that was sufficient to make his blood boil. He first cast his blood-shot eyes at the chairman in a bewildering attitude, and a moment later, with a cry that nearly raised the minister off his feet, he yelled, "Spy." Instantly the lights went out ; the room went round like a haunted swing. Jeremy stared at the objects before him, and he saw in bewilderment that everything had turned upside down. His feet moved unsteadily as his head began to grow dizzy. He saw the Masons, terror-stricken in their seats, but with heads downward, while the doctor, who had turned a complete somersault, still retained a tight hold on the minister's throat, which that worthy was struggling to unloose. The scene shifted and a dazzling light suddenly lit up the darkness. Its glare was as bright as if a hundred electric lights flashed suddenly into the room. Tankards of cool nut-brown ale shone clear beneath the floor, which was transparent as glass. All the while the parson and the doctor fought desperately ; the others had vanished. The light slowly began to fade away, and lo! the silvery moon arose from behind two massive dark clouds. Soon a beautiful panorama appeared. The moon, bright and silvery, shed her graceful shadows over a marble city situated by

the side of a grand river, on whose beautiful bosom floated innumerable gondolas of an infinite variety of makes and colors, propelled by dark-faced rowers. Church bells were sweetly tolling, and from a lofty tower a chorus of a thousand voices kept singing: "God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet." Dimmer grew the pale beams of the moon, and in the fading light could be seen two armies clashing together with irresistible fury. Near the mountains arose two vast pyramids, on whose surface were chiseled great frowning faces. Within their shadow long-robed chieftains fought under a leader entirely clad in white. Their reddish-black faces and ferret-like eyes became more fierce and fiery as they saw the enemy approach, laying low their ranks with deadly charge. The battle raged on till the few that remained broke ranks and fled to the temple, whose turrets pointed heavenward to a great height; one of their number alone remained—the white-robed chieftain. He in bold defiance waved his hand aloft at the thousands that marched down upon him and his empire. At some distance from him the first column of the army halted, and forth from its ranks came a small, well-built general. The two champions, armed with swords, met each other. No two warriors attracted such attention since the days of David and Goliath. The people from the walls of the city looked down upon their chieftain, and prayed with uplifted hands to their Allah. The soldiers of the conquering army watched with admiration their

champion, and whispered a benediction to the true God. There was no parrying. One mighty crash, and both the contestants fell back wounded, in the dust. They arose; this time they were a little more cautious. First one and then the other, made a well-directed thrust that was dexterously stayed. Thrice they came together, and thrice they fell; but the smaller man sprang to the fray with the agility of a tiger at bay, and he laid the mighty red man down with a telling stroke. In a flash he was upon him, and the defeated warrior pleaded for mercy. The gallant little general put his sword into his scabbard, and walked back to the ranks of the army amidst deafening shouts of applause. There was a cry of despair as his less fortunate antagonist moved slowly to the walls of the city. The man in white saw the exasperated faces of the populace, and fled in haste to the temple, with an angry mob at his heels. The enraged people stood clamoring outside the edifice, until the wretched foe and a few followers that had remained faithful to him, made their appearance, and they were driven out of the rear end of the city. As they wandered over the desolate plain the moon sank down slowly behind the mountains and concealed their retreating footsteps. All was now gloomy. The scene changed, and the moon peeped out from behind an avalanche of black clouds, showing the retreat of the exiles, like spectres of the night, climbing up the steep ascent of a lonely mountain that loomed up in their way. Gradually in the glimmering

rays of the rising sun that arose from the mighty ocean, there appeared a gorgeous spectacle. A city with high towering churches and splendidly built structures ascended into view on the calm and beautiful horizon. A death-like silence pervaded its walls, but without there was bustle and much preparation. The sound of the trumpet and clarion soon stirred up the inhabitants, who, running hither and thither, told those who still slept that the enemy was entering the city unmolested. In its ranks were men of all nationalities, and lo! amongst the might soldiery was the same band of exiles who had fought at the base of the pyramids! The soldiers marched on without doing any violence. Stealthily, the white-robed chieftain and his little company, which were ever at his side, broke from the ranks and made their way to a stately mansion, which they cautiously entered. In an instant the place was ablaze. The same gallant little soldier who had contended in deadly combat with the white-robed chieftain rushed from the building, clasping a women and child in his strong arms. Their faces struck the Irishman as being familiar to him. While the ten robed warriors enriched themselves with all they could lay their hands on, their white-robed leader approached to the spot where the father was holding the wife and child in embrace, and unsheathing a large sharp-pointed dagger, he dashed against the general and dealt him an ugly gash upon the shoulder. The father relaxed his hold upon his darlings and fell. The child shrieked wildly

and fell upon him, but the mother stood her ground, face to face with the murderous villain, and bade him desist from his cowardly attack. The scoundrel was not to be thwarted in his design. He saw the stricken man move, and he bounded to his side with flashing eyes and uplifted knife. The faithful wife was, however, ready to defend her prostrate husband, and she grasped the steel in her hand. The chieftain stood back aghast as he saw her bleeding hand uplifted in supplication of mercy. By a sudden impulse he put away his weapon, and moving toward the woman, whispered something in her ear. She stood motionless, and before she realized what had occurred, the would-be assassin of her dear husband put around her neck a chain of magnificent jewels. This done, he gave a low whistle, and in a few seconds he and his followers were soon mingled in the van of the army. All these stirring events passed before the terrified vision of the sexton. The flames of the dwelling spread quickly, while mother and child were staunching the blood that flowed from their injured protector. The magnificent building was soon a pitiful heap of smouldering ruins which concealed the picture of the wounded warrior.

"Bloody rascal!" yelled Jeremy. No sooner had he uttered these words than he was seconded in his remarks by the minister, who was undergoing a similar test or spell. "Traitor," was the concluding repartee of the Irishman. The chamber had once more recovered its equilibrium, and with it the much-

tried chairman. There stood before him the ugly doctor, like another Mephistopheles, still having a tight hold of the minister.

"You have borne the trial gallantly, Mr. Chairman, spoke out one of the more influential of the group. Here is the real spy before you. What is your sentence?"

"Kill him," shouted all present with one accord, before the Irishman could decide what to do with his unlucky friend.

"Gentlemen, I command that sentence be postponed until his greatness, the Rabbi, whom he has offended most, may have an interview with him. Take him away, Brother Lowe, and see that he is securely confined!" The red-eyed physician felt chagrined at the commutation of the sentence. He was certain that an opportunity was to be given him to operate on the poor Irishman's carcass, but the chairman deemed otherwise, and he was supreme. Simon conducted the terrified parson away to his cell, all the while that poor dignitary proclaiming that he was not the right man; but Jeremy had given his decree, and he must undergo the penalty. After some time had elapsed Simon Lowe returned, having bound the minister in a cell, and coming to the chair where Jeremy was exercising his office as High Mason, began to converse with him in a low voice.

"You have acted well your part, Jeremy."

"Och, and is this yerself, Louis? and shure both of us are playing the same trick. How did you get

that hump on yer back and that crank in yer leg? Oh, and how did I stand the trial?"

"Very good. But I'm afraid that your last words will demand of you another test."

"Begorrah, and is it another. After all, it was not so bad for a man with a clear conscience to stand. Louis, what was done with meself and his riverence? I saw all sorts of queer things, from a ghost to a banshee."

"You know better than I. However, from the peculiar actions of the doctor, I judge that he is a mesmerist or hypnotist or a magician."

"Is it one of those fellows that turns a fellow inside out and back again into himself without him knowing it?"

"Enough, Jeremy ; be cautious, and all will turn out right. This is a mighty strange house."

"I believe you, me boy, and I'll do what you say." When Simon Lowe, or rather Louis James, resumed his seat, the sexton knocked again for silence, from force of habit, though you could hear a pin drop.

"The question, gentlemen, before the meeting is, whether or not we shall adopt resolutions in behalf of the Rabbi's wife. What is your pleasure?"

"You mistake the purport of this gathering. The motion has been already carried, and now we only need to draw up suitable resolutions, have them framed, and present them as soon as possible to your Grand Master, and thus show our sympathy in unmistakable terms."

"And does the Rabbi want our sympathy?" inquired Sir Lowe.

"Certainly," snarled several voices, looking contemptously at the money-lender, who, they were aware, was against any proposition that might demand the giving up of any of his precious metal, which he fairly worshipped.

"Oh, well, I would like to object."

They all thought that he was going to stand firm on the financial question, and some of them dug down deeply into their pockets for their wallets to pay the bill for having the resolutions embossed, but in this they were greatly mistaken, as he proceeded:

"And does the Rabbi need our sympathy for another man's wife? I presume that if such resolutions were offered to him he would feel highly insulted."

The doctor bit his tongue with rage. He had never before met with opposition to anything that he proposed, and he fairly growled as he gazed on the money-lender a second time, who stood with a smile of self-congratulation at trying to defy the passing of the proposition. At last the ungovernable temper of the physician burst forth:

"S he was hiswife and of royal blood."

"Royal, indeed—too royal to become another man's wife while her husband still lived."

The bitter remarks of the artist provoked the controversy he had skilfully planned.

"But was she not divorced?" questioned the bleareyed medicine man.

"'Once bound, never broken,' says Scripture."

"Fie with the Scripture! An idle book has idle sayings," ejaculated the doctor, scoffingly.

The debate was waxing hot when the gavel sounded. The two debaters sat down and the Irishman arose.

"It has been proposed that our noble organization and brotherhood extend heartfelt regards to 'Omar' in his sad misfortune. The question comes back again: Was she another man's wife? For want of information, I deem it advisible that this honorable body inquire into the circumstances of their said relationship."

The majority applauded the remarks of the chairman as he took his seat. The Irishman was now master of the situation. He saw with precision what was required of him, and he understood how to carry it out. It is true that he had no schooling, but having lived in a lawyer's house in Dublin, he managed to pick up "a little bit of delivery," as he expressed it. The effort on such a momentous occasion was worthy of him. He managed to put away to some extent, the brogue which characterized his usual addresses, and imitate the polished style of his minister-friend, who was born in the hot-bed of Orangeism in the north of Ireland.

"I consider," responded a heavy set man who spoke through a large peaked nose, "that our honorable chairman's remarks are apropos. I, for one, will never sign a document which I do not understand."

The fat man was evidently excused on account of

his avoirdupois from taking the floor, as he delivered his speech from a pent up position against the wall. His sentences were of the drolling sort—those of an individual whose sole ambition in life seemed to be placed in being able to draw out a comfortable existence, which was a pretty hard task to do under such rotundity. Having drawn a sufficient quantity of breath—his former supply being exhausted by his former eloquence—he continued : "The seal of our grand society demands a thorough knowledge of the subject before it authorizes the chairman to stamp his hand to any bill for which our organization would be held responsible. In the present instance, the gentleman in whose favor we are to express our sincere friendship in this sad hour of his bereavement is known to all Masonic circles. Who has not heard of Rabbi Omar, the Prince of the East, our Grand Master, leader and advocate? and still I am forced to confess that I know very little of his personality."

"What! Mr. Rompkins, would you have his history unfolded when a spy lurks around?"

This assertion was brought up by a chronic dyspeptic man, and instantly put the chamber in an uproar.

"Where? where?" shouted each in louder tones than his fellow. Jeremy had now an opportunity to show his control over the infuriated body, and he rapped for order until the gavel broke, and forgetting himself, he leaped on the table and danced a reel with madness.

"Order! order!" he cried.

"Not until you are safe behind bars. You are the traitor," yelled the chronic man. The Irishman felt for his revolver, but before he could use it he was seized by several strong arms, and after a desperate struggle, landed safely in prison—there once more to share the company of his friend the minister. The cleverness of the artist was manifested in every act. While the scuffle lasted in which Jeremy was being dragged to the cell, he managed to land a few stinging blows upon the howling doctor's pate—blows that were directed at the struggling spy, but which, for some unexplained reason, fell short of their mark. The doctor swore more fiercely every time he received one, but an apology was some retribution. After the trouble had subsided—without even an invitation—the doctor took the chair. The meeting was then called to order for the third time. The red-eyed physician was about to question, but the artist arose and claimed the floor. He saw that further opposition on his part might cause suspicion, and in order to ward it off, he began a ringing speech in favor of the resolutions.

"We know that our Master Mason has been one of the foremost members of our organization since its foundation. He worked zealously for the moral advancement and well-being of his fellow-members, and the least we can do is to show our sympathy for him in his misfortune, in the manner agreed upon.

His winning words told with all present, and they applauded him vigorously.

"How much storm has not been maliciously raised against our director since the time of the accident! When misfortune comes to a family, it never comes single-handed. The people at large have expressed little sorrow with the prince in his affliction. Calumny has stood up against him. The secret designs of this house are suspected. Spies are at work. Let us then right the wrong that lies in the hearts and minds of men outside our society."

The room resounded with applause.

"How can we best do it? I would answer with Mr. Rompkins' well weighed remarks. Let us understand each other. Double-dealing must be unknown to any of our sacred band. If we have a secret, it must come out, and while the world may try to ascertain it, we alone must treasure it up in our hearts."

The concluding remarks of the Jew caused a hilarious uproar.

"Who is at the bottom of the conspiracy against the House of Omar," queried the fat man from his seat in the corner.

"The papists," roared the doctor. They spread dangerous reports against our master, because I resented the superstitious prayers of my sweetheart at the burial of Lady Omar."

"What are the charges, doctor," asked the fat man again, "that they lay at the prince's door?"

"All that Romanistic minds can imagine: 'Murder, robbery, divorce, and infidelity,' and a whole series of the most degrading kind."

"Think you they need no investigation?" was the sarcastic rejoiner of Rompkins.

"No, no; they are absolutely false in each particular."

The young artist stood listening to the conversation with apparent indifference, which he was forced to change to one of intense inquiry as he heard the identical crimes that Sister Marguerite had so often enumerated, repeated now by the ugly quack.

"For the benefit of those present, I will narrate the romantic life of our Grand Master," replied the physician, cynically. "When Paris was attacked by the allied armies of Europe under Wellington and Bleucher in 1815, the Rabbi, who had been a caliph in the Far-off East, and heir apparent to the throne of the Mamelukes, came with a band of royal followers and joined the army of the German general against Napoleon, who had devastated the kingdom of Omar and dragged him from the right of throneship at the battle of the Pyramids. The gates of Paris opened to this conqueror without any bloodshed. One night while the army lay encamped within the walls, one of the royal palaces was accidentally set on fire by the discharge of a bomb. A detachment under the prince was sent to the rescue of the inhabitants of the burning building. Boldly our master entered, and in danger to his own life he came to a room in which he found an old gentleman, his wife and child. The prince seized the woman and child, and when he had carried them to a place of safety he returned

and gallantly rescued the man, who was seriously wounded and who would have perished in the flames were it not for the bravery of the prince. The mother and child were exceedingly grateful to him for his heroic act, but the old man only cursed him for his pains. At that moment the prince recognized the face of the wounded man, and behold! it was the general whose life he had spared on the plains of his native country. His ingratitude moved the prince to tears, seeing which, the old man was touched, and weeping bitterly, begged our master's pardon, which was readily granted. The general, feeling that his end was drawing to a close, recommended his wife and daughter to the Rabbi's care. He looked well after his charge, and provided ample means of support and a suitable home for his charges until he would return for them from the campaign in which he had enlisted. He left Paris, and an adventurous life was in store for him until after the Eastern war, when he came back to Paris and to his sorrow found that the woman and child that were entrusted to him had gone to seek his whereabouts in America. Immediately the prince and his followers, having no settled abode, sailed thither, and a few years' search brought them together in the Yellow Manse, where he married the general's wife. This is the history of his life in brief. Whatever may contradict my narrative is false. I suppose his romantic career has somewhat leaked out, and the idle and corrupted imagination of crazy-headed papists have contrived to invent some vile

fabric which would tell against him in the courts of the city." When the doctor paused, there was no further questioning. "There is a motion before the house that suitable resolutions be drawn up and presented to our Grand Master. All in favor?" There was no objection, and the motion was unanimously carried.

"The committee shall consist of Simon Lowe, the Reverend Long, when that gentleman's identity can be proved, and myself. When we shall assemble to decide the fate of the spy to-morrow night, we shall then perform the task imposed upon us." The meeting was adjourned.

The ugly red-haired doctor concluded all the business in quick order. He put the motion, seconded it, and named the committee, and adjourned the meeting, all in a breath. The Masons departed one after another from the Yellow Manse, and took different directions to their respective homes. Louis was the last to leave; he disliked to go and leave poor Jeremy behind, but he knew that he could not rescue him without spoiling the chances of acquiring more knowledge the next morning, and, perhaps, of hearing the secret revealed. He was consoled that no serious harm would happen the sexton for the remainder of the night, and relied on his own ability and tact to rescue his friend when the danger would be greatest. The doctor accompanied Louis to the door and bade him a pleasant good night as he descended the steps of the mysterious mansion. The physician remained, fastening

securely the door behind which was the mystery. Louis sauntered homeward by a roundabout way. He watched cautiously that no one dogged his footsteps, and as he entered the old-fashioned stone rectory in the rear, his thoughts were mingled with sadness and joy. His mind was a blank as he lay his weary head upon his pillow and fell asleep.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN LOVE IS IN EARNEST.

THE Irishman, bound hand and foot, spent a sleepless night upon the stone floor of his cell. True, he had a companion, but misery in his predicament did not want such companionship. What fate awaited him when he would be recognized, was the absorbing topic that worried him. He cared not so much to die as to leave the mystery unsolved. How had Louis fared?

"It may be, perhaps, the lot of us both to die together," he began to lisp aloud in his accustomed way. "Wirra, wirra, it's not for a man to be thinkin' about himself all the time."

He listened a moment, and continued in his soliloquizing strain.

"Mayn't the walls have ears? Spake aisy, me boy, I'm told they tell a terrible lot sometimes."

Fortunate enough would he have been, if he had followed his own suggestion. Although the minister,

who occupied the same cell with him, snored loudly, an enemy more to be feared than the much-persecuted dominie, was lurking around. The doctor was on the alert, noting every remark that fell from the lips of the prisoner. Revenge was his sole purpose. He had ever regarded the parson with suspicion since the time he had refused to marry him to Miss Angelina against her will. This was the reason that he did not strive to discover the identity of the minister on that night and permit him to go free. Moreover, he fancied under the circumstances, that the worthy divine might condescend to tie the knot if an opportunity should answer. Of course his chief design was to catch the spy, and he was not altogether sure which was really the parson, as he was but little acquainted with him. He had remembered the sound blow that he received from the sexton, and he awaited an opportunity to glut his vengeance upon him. At last his listening ears were rewarded with the news which startled him. The Irishman, muttering aloud, went on: "I played a trump card to-day, begorrah, until the red-headed rascal caught on to the trick. Och, if me old mother, God rest her soul, saw me now in a din of thieves and murderers and "whatnots," she'd give me a prayer that would not find me in such devil-like company again. Of coorse, I'm caught like a rat in a trap, but when the dog comes to give me a shake, he'll find me a hard lad to tackle. The interest of meself, me girl, me dear priests and the poor Sister Marguerite, are all at stake, and all me friends must

know one day that I was true to the last. Indade, this is a queer house, so it is. Talk about fairy tales, and the good people, and ghosts, and banshees,—I've never seen the like to bate all the things that I saw this day. I might as well say that I don't know what happened as to tell what occurred in this enchanted Mansion. Shure a man sees mighty queer things when he's half-intoxicated, but here I am meself as sober as his riverence Father Matthew ever was. The Irishman broke off his drifting conversation, but soon wandered on again: "Oh, bless me soul, if Father Rogers had given me the powers of drivin' out the devil as I asked him, no better fun I'd like than usin' it on the devils of this place and scourin' it of their presence. I must, however, confide in the powers above to shield me from those below. And at any rate, God is stronger than the devil."

The doctor here laughed so unpleasantly loud that Jeremy blessed himself.

"They're exercisin' their pranks again. Oh, then, wouldn't I like to be among them with a good old Irish stick with plenty of thorns on it, and spirits or men, I'd make them do a hornpipe."

All was now quite as the sexton ceased speaking. The doctor thought that he had been discovered, and crouched lower in the dark corner in which he was hiding. He almost feared to breathe; but in a few minutes he was relieved from his anxiety by the revelation the sexton delivered to himself.

"Arrah, but taking me position soberly and sensibly,

I'm not much to be pitied, if the scoundrels only leave me head sound. I learned a good bit of the Mystery from the test. I have put two and two together, and maybe me judgment is right: Those cities and battles, real or pictorial, have set me on the proper track. How does this go? Old Omar married the wife of the soldier that he stabbed. Och, but the soldier himself might have lived on. The two things seem contradictory. If she were a lady, it would not be like her to have married the man that struck her husband; but this is a foolish world, and the wisest of us sometimes become fools, and the most foolish sometimes become wise. And then, secondly, she might have got a divorce; but there is nothing more unnatural than that. It is a great country where you can marry, be divorced and marry again. I'm wonderin' to meself that there aint uprisin's every day. Son against father, and daughter against mother. Grantin' that divorce be in the case, I can explain the rest aisy enough. Any woman capable of marrying another man while her husband lives, will neither stop at murder or infidelity. Yet, I'll never grant that this good lady did this. I'm rather mixed up. The Mystery is darker than ever. Oh, if I could tell all I know to me darlint, and she, poor creature, could carry it straight to the priests, then would me duty be fulfilled. Farewell, I would say to Molly, the idol of me life, and tell her I sacrificed all for a good purpose. And, oh, for a blessin' from the young and the old priest, and a look at poor Sister Marguerite, and

a shake of the hand with me friend Louis who has to fight the battles alone. Little does he know how she loves him. Miss Angelina told me by her own lips that he was the nicest gentleman she ever met. Oh, could I but tell him, and tell her the self-same story of how he loves her, then I would rest aisy in this life, or in the next, as quick as God wishes to call me."

He had hardly ended his lament when the cell door sprung open, and the madly-jealous doctor rushed in, stumbling over the sleeping form of the minister, falling heavily on the stone floor. He arose slowly, and turning upon the parson, gave him several knocks that made him yell murder. The light of day had not as yet penetrated the prison, and all was dark as night within the cell. The doctor was now sadly at a loss to tell which one had been speaking, and this troubled him far more than the fall he had received. His red-gnarled hair rose from his cross-grained forehead, while his red ferret eyes flashed fire under his shaggy-haired eyebrows. In his mad desperation he gave both a beating. Jeremy bore his punishment without a wince. This only served to strengthen the doctor's belief that he was beating the wrong man, and again mistaking the Reverend Stephen Long for the Irishman, he began to pummel him roughly. The sexton viewed the situation coolly as the blear-eyed quack addressed the much-mistaken parson.

"So you have dared to spy into this house. Unless you tell all the secret stories that have been circu-

lated against it, I shall spill out every drop of your heart's blood."

Saying this, he drew out his sharp-pointed dagger.

"Oh, mercy! man, mercy! I am—"

"You are a spy."

"No, no."

"Liar, I heard the story that escaped your lips. Come, quickly, tell me who you are."

"Stephen Long—the preacher."

"Fool, you are putting your life to a briefer period!"

He struck the minister another blow. Things had gone about far enough to suit Jeremy. He was willing that his friend in misfortune should share a little suffering with him in a good cause, but it was going too far altogether. He had got one of his hands free, and he was determined to use it shortly, unless better treatment was shown his fellow-prisoner. Again the doctor shouted: "Your name!"

The minister was silent. Once more, and with a terrible oath, he repeated: "Your name! Is it Owens?"

"No," was the only response, and the enraged medicine man struck him once more. In the meantime the minister had contemplated some sort of defense, and made strenuous efforts to unloose his bonds.

"Enough of such work, doctor; wait until he is found guilty and has vindicated my name and title."

"Be still, parson, you shall not dictate to me what I am to do."

Out of pure maliciousness he kicked the minister, but before he could repeat his cowardly act the Irishman dealt him a box that sent him spinning over the dominie. The latter had got one hand loose, and while Jeremy knelt upon him, Stephen evened up matters by punishing the doctor severely. The Irishman secured the dangerous knife, and now the burly physician was in a worse plight than either of the prisoners. He could not raise himself to his feet. His reddish eyes were partly closed, and he pouted like an overgrown child. For some time he lay moaning bitterly, when suddenly he jumped to his feet, and whipping out his revolver: "Have you crossed my path again?" said he, pointing the pistol in the face of Jeremy. There was no deceiving the doctor, as the morning sun peeped into the cell.

"Your life is short, young man, and you must needs be serious."

"Serious, indade—it's too serious I am, lying here on the broad of me back without a drink to slacken me thirst the live-long night."

"No dallying, man, you are treating with one that is desperate. I heard much from your lips—news that is useful to me. I must learn more—else I'll shoot you down like a dog."

"Please, sir, what did you hear?"

"You have dared to enter the secret chamber of our order, and if you wish to die quickly and without pain, answer me this, or I will reserve you for the torture.

"Who is the man who loves Miss Angelina?"

The Irishman was aroused to the perilous position in which he found himself.

"Oh, sir, there are many that love and admire that same darlint, and if I can believe me own eyes, there's no one that loves her more dearly than yourself."

This unexpected compliment, while checking the wrath of the blear-eyed Mason, did not answer the question.

"That is not enough. Tell me candidly, does she love another?"

"I suppose she is like every girl of her beauty—she knows how to appreciate a young man when or wherever she sees him."

"Your moments of life are few unless you answer me quickly: Who is the man she loves most?"

"None more than yerself perhaps."

"Have you this from her own lips?"

"I never asked her, but then she told me she had a fancy for yerself."

This language tickled thedoctor, yet the blood of rancor still coursed in his veins.

"Have I a rival?"

"Yes; to be simple, sir."

"Who is he?"

"Meself, sir."

"So then you are in love with Miss Angelina. Ha! you look nice in chains," said he, with an attempt at smiling.

"Och, maybe I look as well as yerself," and the

Irishman laughed heartily. "I know, were it not for circumstances, she'd have me long ago."

"Oh, she wants wealth and beauty."

"I don't know about the money part of it, but trust me, if she wants the beauty side of it, I still got a store the better of ye."

At this stiff rejoiner the doctor danced around the floor like a maniac; he swore against himself and the Irishman.

"You have responded to all my questions in an ambiguous manner. No tomfoolery, spy, you are in my hands; who is the favored suitor?"

"One whom she fairly worships, but I believe, like a fool, he loves another."

"His name."

"Louis James."

"Yes; 'tis he whom I suspected whose suit is most favored."

"Favor or no, he loves Miss Angelina as much as he does you, and between us both, that's very little."

"You seem to know the young man well."

"Pshaw! why wouldn't I?"

"What do you know about him?"

"Well, without going into particulars, he is as fine a fellow within as without. Would that your face had that gentle and nice expression of Mr. James, and you were as free from sin as that gentleman."

"Bosh! I am to understand that you met Miss Angelina."

"Yes, often; yet not often enough."

"What business had you to transact with her?"

"Simply tell her, like yerself, that I loved her, and then arrange it so that me friend Louis could do the same. I'd like to see her darlint face just now, and I'd bet me life she'd do a good turn for us both."

"She can do me no good."

"Do you not love her?"

"Ah! you have guessed correctly."

"Well, then, put away that instrument that you are so carelessly thumbing, and I'll arrange a meetin' for you."

"A meeting; impossible. Ha! ha! you know that I love her."

"To be sure, sir, I know everything that goes on under this roof."

The doctor instantly raised his revolver. Then you shall keep your secret to yourself. He fired, but the bullet merely grazed his head, though it was fired point blank at the sexton's face.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried the Irishman. He saw that he had made a mistake. The minister awoke from his dejection with a startled cry of pity, supplicating in behalf of Jeremy.

"One minute longer," begged that worthy.

"Given," said the doctor, with a kind of hellish glee.

"I wish one favor before me end arrives," spoke the sexton, recovering his self-possession.

"What is it?"

"Please take a message to my beloved Miss An-

gelina, and give it to her through Molly Liffey."

"Indeed, you ask this request boldly; only think that a few moments lie between you and eternity—aye, a moment. The gulf to death is bridged by a very narrow margin, and you can little afford to show your face at the gate of eternity so quickly by daring to send a letter to my affianced."

The coolness of the Irishman overcame the wrath of the Mason. The Irishman understood this, and acted accordingly. He carefully avoided anything about the secrets of the lodge, and renewed the inquiry of Angelina.

"You can never win that lady without me consent."

"Fool! it matters little to me whether you give it or not, provided she accepts my hand."

"But this she shall never do, because I have her in me power. You love this miss dearly, and I confess that I once had some affection for her, but another man stood in me way, and that was yerself."

"Then you were jealous of me."

"Of coorse, I felt a bit chagrined at me rejection, and that was all."

"Did you seek another sweetheart?"

"Yer jokin' now; ask yerself, friend, if you were deprived of yer darlintest little love, would you go and give her up and look out for one not half so pretty and so fair? Oh, no! I took the matter up seriously, and finally resolved that if she wanted to court me any more she would have to come to me first."

"She never came."

"Begorrah, remorse overtook her, and she came indeed, and told me plainly that she would have nothing more to do with me. I agreed with her at last, but in order to repay me for me stolen affections, I made her promise that she would grant me one favor."

"What was that?"

"Well, I never asked it; but I will be at your sarvice if you consent to give her a note."

"On one condition—that she give me one half hour's conversation."

"I'll wish that, sir," and Jeremy began to jot down a few lines, though he was never master of any more than pot-hook letters. "Anyhow, began the Irishman in his usual manner of talking to himself, "as I must endure the extreme penalty, I'm privileged to say what I think proper," and growing eloquent, he broke out into a loud strain. "And sure there's nothing wrong in saying that the devil has a good hold on yer lean carcass."

The sarcasm of the sexton produced a volley of oaths from the ugly red Mason which was terrible to hear.

"Oh, didn't I declare the truth," he continued, unconscious of the effect his soliloquy was working in the unbalanced temper of his jailer.

"No one but a tinker would swear such dreadful things, and I know meself that every tinker has some alliance with the old boy. Mighty indeed is the simple term called love."

This delighted or wrinkled the hearing of the doctor, according to the way it was manipulated by the sexton. It had reduced a desperate villain to a simple fool. The doctor heard the whole party concerned in the attempt to reveal the secrets of the "Yellow Manse." Nevertheless, he would sacrifice the most solemn oaths of his brotherhood—aye, even the darkest secret of the Rabbi, to obtain the hand of Lady Angelina. She had rejected him on every occasion that he had made protestations of his effections for her—whether publicly or privately. Yet he would suffer a thousand greater rebuffs if in the end he could call her his own.

"In love—I think that's the expression they use when a lad does all sorts of queer antics."

"And do I act thus?"

"Maybe; I don't know for certain, but I see from experience that yer crazy in love with Miss Angelina, and therefore not to be trusted with this letter."

"Why, sir?"

"Because she loves me, and we are rivals. Am I then to confide me secrets to your ears?"

"She loves me not," yelled the doctor, piqued at the ironical sayings of the Irishman. He danced up and down the cell like a Comanche Indian singing a death song. "She shall one day."

"Shure she will, if ye put your case into me hands."

"Can you do something for me?"

"Do, is it?—certainly."

"How?"

"Take these chains from about me legs."

"Ha! ha! I cannot release you. The Rabbi has sent word that you must stand trial to-night in his presence. What would become of me if I were to let you escape? The secrets of the Manse would be revealed, and death would be our only relief from a wicked and deceitful world. I have sworn that your secrets, whatever they be, shall die with you."

"Well, then, I'm satisfied and happy, since goin' to me grave, I'll know that you'll never become the husband of Miss Angelina without me consent. Let me give you a straight tip, sir, that you have no quality to recommend to her. You are blear-eyed and red-headed. To be sure you may have money, but that will never obtain the promise you seek from that beautiful young lady." Jeremy spoke with great deliberation.

"I have sworn, I have sworn," replied the Mason, excitedly.

"Don't break yer oaths for me. God knows yer soul at present is black enough ; but remember well, and keep it safe in yer mind, that you'll never have the meetin' you crave, nor the hand of the pretty mistress of the manor."

"You can refuse me everything but consent to the marriage."

"Och, but I'm thinkin' that old Omar has something to say about that."

The Mason was sadly perplexed by every retort that the Irishman gave, but he was thrown into a

worse plight by the tinkling of a bell which resounded in the cell. Without the least hesitation he quickly loosened the chains that bound the sexton.

"Free the poor parson while ye're at it, for God knows he has suffered enough, between us. The physician deeming that the granting of this request was a matter of diplomacy, soon set at liberty the stiffened limbs of the minister.

"The note, hurry!" Jeremy handed him a small piece of paper.

"When will the meeting take place?"

"When you find it convenient."

There were sounds of footsteps without, and the doctor signalled the Rabbi's followers to enter. They wore mantles of coarse red material. The sun's rays by this time peered through the prison windows, and reflected upon their dark, reddish faces, and made their little black eyes sparkle like diamonds. The sudden appearance of the men struck terror in the heart of Jeremy, not because their faces looked so savage, but because they resembled ghostlike individuals whom he had seen when he was undergoing the Masonic test. What he considered a frightful dream was now a decided reality. His short sturdy frame shook with emotion as the doctor seized him and led him by the arm behind the procession of red men. They entered a mysterious hall. On either side appeared all kinds of statuary. All the Greek and Roman divinities were there represented in bold relief. Old arms and weapons of all descriptions

were piled up in huge heaps. Pictures of rare beauty—of which he could only catch a glimpse under the yellow glare of the light of the torches which his captors carried, showed exquisite taste and workmanship. When at last they came to a halt, his eyes rested on the picture of the Blessed Virgin, the beauty and execution of which were incomparable. The features seemed to express a familiar likeness to him. Oh, it was his good mother looking down upon him in his misery. A large iron door was suddenly opened, and the group disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER VI.

CONFLICTING MESSAGES.

IN the plain, modest parlor of the rectory sat the two priests and Sister Marguerite and her companion, talking in subdued tones. It was approaching midday. They were evidently most anxious about something, for their faces, which were filled with gloomy forebodings, bore out their sentiments. A knocker resounded on the door, and all three stood up to welcome the young artist. As soon as he had seated himself, Father Rogers began:

"My boy, we felt worried about you. Where have you been? Have you any news from Jeremy?"

The face of Louis turned pale as he heard the name of his dear friend. Quickly recovering himself, he asked with composure:

"Is Jeremy absent again?"

"Yes," replied the rector, "we have not seen him in two days. This is something unusual. Occasionally he would go off for a little relaxation, but that would not last, at most, more than twenty-four hours. I fear for him; the times are wicked."

"Any news from the mansion?" inquired the curate. Before the artist could answer, a second knock was heard on the door. Louis opened it, and a small boy delivered to him two messages. He inquired where he had got them. The lad stammered out that they were given to him by a red-haired man. This was certainly strange. Two messages from the doctor, with Jeremy's hieroglyphics on one of them. The more he queried the boy, the more earnestly the latter declared that what he said was true. Feeling satisfied that the lad told the truth, the artist dismissed him with a silver piece. He read the note, or, more properly, deciphered it, as he had instructed the unscholarly Irishman in a code of signals that were known only to pupil and teacher. It was translated as follows:

"Dear Louis, meet your darlint girl at eleven to-night in the Manse.

"JEREMY."

The artist grew flushed with anger for a moment and in a subdued voice said: "Neither Miss Angelina nor Jeremy sent this."

He looked up from the paper, and to his astonishment saw all three looking at him in wonderment, for

they had heard him mention half-audibly those names that were so affiliated to each one of them.

"Oh, I have been, as usual, day-dreaming," remarked the artist, apologetically, trying to suppress the violent emotions that were rising in his bosom. Just then the pastor came to the rescue. "There is no use of concealment ; you love Miss Angelina ! "

" Jeremy understands his business."

" Is that the Lady of the Manse across the way."

" Yes," mildly responded the artist.

A rigid whiteness beamed from the dark-complexioned youth. Sister Marguerite then spoke to him. Every word that she uttered, for some unexplained reason, stirred him up to an uncontrollable kind of fear for which he could not account. He longed to ask her many questions. Jeremy had told him a weird tale, and perhaps after all there might be some truth to it. He held in reserve a stock of secrets that she might aid him to unfold, but he disdained to agitate her timid soul by problems so dark and deep that he himself could not refrain from shuddering as he thought of them. He feared that the very nun before him was deeply connected in some way or other with the wonderful old house. He suspected that many crimes were committed within that dismal abode, and no wonder he dreaded any revelations that might be made ; yet he had a problem to solve, and he hoped that God would help him to surmount the difficulties that lay in his path.

" O great heaven ! " he breathed in his inmost soul,

"suppose the relatives of the good Superioress of St. Mary's were among the workers of iniquity? Scandal, that base monster which is hated by society more than any other evil, would break that noble woman's heart." The keen eye of Sister Marguerite saw the trouble that was working in the mind of the artist.

"Speak out, Louis—who is this Miss Angelina?"

"Madam Omar, the daughter of an Eastern prince."

"Was she born in the East?"

"I think not, Sister."

"Louis, remember she is an infidel, and in order to win her, you must first convert her," replied the pastor.

The pale cheeks of the artist blushed crimson.

"I think, Father Rogers, she is a believer in Christ."

"Why, then, does she not show it? She never attends to her duties."

"I think she is forbidden to do so by the hypnotic power of her keeper."

"Yes; a prisoner," urged Sister Marguerite.

"Well, if such be the case, can you not rescue her?" interposed the curate, addressing Louis.

"It is hardly possible at present. She is watched continually. Moreover, she would not flee alone, as two children, in whom she takes the greatest interest, would remain behind, and naturally she could not be induced to forsake them."

"My friend, pardon me, but I think you have things slightly mixed up. Can it be that a lady is a prisoner in her own house?"

"Father Delon, I confess that I am somewhat puzzled over the circumstances of the case."

After some moments pause the nun's mind, which found no rest, sought some relief in interrogating or repeating the facts which nearly made up her sad existence.

"But tell me all you have learned, Mr. James, of the lady; she must be the retainer of the secret of my father's death. Having come to that, my mother and sister may be traced out. Nigh twenty years have elapsed since I heard from my beloved ones, when lo! I heard the horrifying tale of murder from my dying father's lips. Oh, Louis, you have promised to aid me; be faithful, and let not this night pass without seeking to inquire from that lady the secret that surrounds my poor father's death."

When Sister Marguerite ceased speaking, she moved briskly to the door, and borne down with sorrow almost to the grave, she walked quickly across the lawn, accompanied by her companion, to the convent. When she had departed, Father Rogers renewed the conversation:

"Did you gain admittance to the Manse?"

"Oh, yes, Father, and I learned a great deal that I would gladly impart to you, but to give it to you in its crude state, as it really exists in my mind, would only serve to mix up matters worse than they are at present. My brain is fairly engrossed in the Mystery of the Yellow Manse. Each tale that I have so far heard thus conflicts in some degree with the

former ones. Until the link that unites them all presents itself, my mind will remain in a state of chaos, and behold! there is the link." The artist pointed to the picture of the Rabbi which he had sketched during the funeral.

"I have not as yet been able to have a chat with him, but I assure you, that when that time comes a revelation will be made. To-night, perhaps—this very night—will clear up the Mystery of the Yellow Manse." Louis then read the second note, which was written in a small, crabbed hand:

"Beware! spy. Still as death must your voice remain until your dying day, or else you shall die like a dog. You know the secret of the lodge. We have your friend and accomplice in our toils, and he shall pay the penalty. Take warning by his death. Throw off your disguise, and never dare be seen in the neighborhood of the mansion. You can do no good by informing the city authorities of our doings, as we have them already fixed, and bear in mind that wherever you go, a Mason shall lie in wait for you."

The only signature was a skull. He read the missive over and over again. Louis James was not a coward, yet the messages were so conflicting that he could not reconcile them, and he trembled violently at the awful threats which were in store for him should it become known that the Manse was a place where plots of Masonic cruelty were planned. He understood that his entrance to the mansion was perhaps forever foiled. He passed the letter to the priests,

who in turn devoured its contents eagerly and with great alarm.

"So you want my advice, my son," spoke the pastor: "keep aloof from that place, and do not disregard the warning. With your death the Mystery is still unsolved, and in all probability the scandal which we have so strongly tried to suppress shall leak out. You life is in danger. Stay away to-night."

"To-night, Father, Jeremy dies!"

"What!" replied the bewildered clergyman, who had glanced too quickly over the sexton's condemnation. "Go to his assistance, and may God guard you!"

"Immediately!" responded the curate, excitedly. "Put on some disguise."

"No; I will rely on some other means."

"May our Blessed Lady bless and protect you, Louis, from all evils," said the dark-eyed assistant, opening the door and bidding the artist good-night. The night was rather cool. The sky was dull and heavy and a drizzling rain was falling The lurid glare which a few lamps gave, showed that the streets were deserted. The approaching storm afforded some pretense for the artist to turn up his coat collar close about his neck and pull down his cap over his eyes. He had not proceeded to a great distance within the lonely grave-yard—the way he considered safe to the Manse because it lay close to the river—when he was accosted by two strangers whom he recognized as members of the Masonic Lodge (ever recognizable as

members by their dark countenances and emblematic links). They seized him by the neck, and seeing that resistance was out of the question with such odds, Louis merely feigned to fight, when he was really reserving his strength for a more suitable occasion to exercise it. They dragged him down toward the river front. He knew his captors. One was the lame, hunch-back broker, Simon Lowe, whose person the artist had contrived to imitate the night previously. He was the Shylock of the city, known especially for his mean dealings and rank bigotry. The mighty dollar was the end of his ambition—his god. His companion was the long-jawed minister, who possessed many good qualities, but which, alas! were overshadowed by the company he kept. His church was a magnificent structure in the very heart of the city. He was a minister of the people, not of God. He discoursed on everything, from a love-match to the latest rise and fall in market bulls—anything to please the wishes of his fickle congregation. In his early days he preached the plain truth of the Gospel, but his flock had tired of this, and he had either to be up to date or seek another call. The former was preferable, as he was perfectly satisfied with receiving five thousand dollars a year, not including gifts, with the obligation of preaching an up-to-date sermon on Sunday evening, while he was privileged to close his church altogether during the summer. Such were the captors of Louis James, united to each other by no bond of affection other than the degrading brother-

ly sympathy which a Freemason's oath demands. They had a difficulty to solve with the artist, and when they brought him to a secluded place, Simon scowled in nasal tones :

"So, young man, you have defied our warning, and now you must pay a good price to get out of our power."

"Hush, Simon, no money can release him."

"Not except a great amount."

"Your oath, friend, your oath. Would you violate that?"

"Not for ten times one hundred, but for ten times ten—I would consider that, Stephen."

"Break your oath for ten thousand dollars!"

"O ho, as far as money—money goes."

The clock in St. Mary's struck the hour of eleven. The Masons had a firm grasp of their prisoner, but they were divided in their opinions as to what they shoulddo with him. Louis James understood that the committee on resolutions was to meet at twelve, and then was to be decided the Irishman's fate. It mattered not whether the other members of the committee were present as long as the doctor was there—for that gentleman would only too readily transact the entire business. The artist listened to the conversation of the minister and the Jew, wishing, if possible, to ascertain if his identity had been found out in the Manse. But what difference did it make, under the circumstances. He was held in their vice-like grip, so escape by fighting was beyond consideration. He

must soon adopt some method to deliver himself out of their hands. He was aware of the greed of the money-lender, but he had not wherewith to satiate his thirst.

"You ought not to hold me a prisoner," he protested. "Why treat an inoffensive citizen in such a manner? You have mistaken the man."

"I presume that you are Mr. James," gallantly asserted the dominie.

"Yes, sir.

"Now, James, you shall spend the night with us, instead of prying into the secrets of our order. That partner of yours dies to-night. He is a fox, altogether too sly to have let me escape and himself perish. We do not mean to injure you, but simply to keep you out of harm's way."

When Louis realized that perhaps the fate of his friend was in the balance, he made up his mind to act quickly. He had shown timidity till now, and by that means had partly thrown them off their guard. A resolution, a mighty dash—and he was away toward the river. Unfortunately in his haste he stumbled, and the minister, fleet of foot, was upon him. There was a fierce struggle, and Louis was getting the better of the argument when the limping Jew came breathlessly to the rescue. Now the encounter waxed exceedingly hot. The minister, who was underneath, suffered most, and to add to his uncomfortable position, he was greatly discomfited by the furious raillery of fists which came within an ace each time

of disfiguring his genteel face forever. Shylock the second was a man of great strength, but the artist was more agile, and dealt his adversary several blows to the one he received. One over the other, they rolled, until the three—a struggling mass—locked in one another's embrace, toppled over into the river. They arose to the surface still struggling. The artist being an expert swimmer, contrived by desperate efforts to free himself from their clutches, and swam to the dock, leaving the two Masons, who could not swim, drowning each other in the dark waters below.

CHAPTER VII.

STRANGE SIGHTS AND STRANGE PEOPLE.

THE darkness into which Jeremy was conducted blinded him for a few moments. The candles which his captors carried were put out by the dank, misty breeze that pervaded the interior. Four granite pillars of roughly-cut rock supported the roof, that appeared to be a black, coal-like substance. The floor was of stone, and every footfall of the procession startled unearthly echoes. In the centre of the strange apartment stood a platform, upon which was placed a massive chair with a back twenty or more feet high and studded with precious stones. In the background was a brazen choir loft, in which posed a ponderous organ whose gigantic pipes reached to the roof, a distance of fifty or more

feet. On the platform surrounding the great chair were twelve smaller ones of ordinary size, upon which rested beautiful cushions; before the stage opened a vast pit in which was a large gallery. At the sound of a bell innumerable lights of various colors shed their brilliant glare over the whole place. It was a strange scene—a regular fairyland which the Irishman was wont to dream about in days gone by. He was lost in admiration as he viewed the surroundings. The roof glistened like diamonds, while the choir loft shone as gold. Soon the mighty organ rolled off its sonorous notes as Jeremy was escorted to the stage by the dark band. Bewilderment seized him as he walked up and down with a gallant stride—like a tragedian of antiquity—observing the splendor of the cave. Slowly marching from a rear entrance, a strange cortege made its way. Two pretty black-haired children dressed in white headed the procession, seated upon two jet-black ponies. Next came slowly behind, two young ladies whose faces and dress the Irishman stared at for some time in admiration. They wore tightly fitting gowns of red silk with ornaments of gold. Immediately following appeared a line of old men and women arranged in the most varied and indescribable costumes that one could imagine. Lastly a chariot of white and gold drawn by four white horses hovered into view, in which was seated the mysterious white-haired prince enrobed in a superb silken gown. As soon as the red men espied their chieftain they sang out above the high resounding organ: "Allah! Allah!

God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet." By the side of the prince sat a young lady clad in black, whose features were concealed by a heavy black veil. The eyes of the sexton were constantly fixed upon the dark reddish face of her mysterious companion. As the chariot stopped at the stage, he alighted and took the lady by the arm and escorted her toward Jeremy, who was acting the part of a piece of statuary, so dumbfounded was he by all that passed before his eyes. The sexton scanned the prince with scrutiny as he seated himself on the great chair. A wealth of finery essayed to cover the blemishes of his ill-foreboding looks. Neither powder or wig, however, could conceal all to the observant watcher. The Rabbi was a homely man, the self-same who was carried on the shoulders of his braves at the burial of Lady Omar. The big chair in which he sat was turned around and moved forward. Jeremy, too, turned full around to catch a better glimpse of the man with whom he had to deal. When he thought that he had him sufficiently studied, the sexton faced the audience with an air of composure. He saw the pit filled with a great mass of people. Children of all ages sat in what might be called the orchestra; the middle-aged folks held the first balcony; while the elders occupied the gallery proper. The ten red gowns stepped to the front and seated themselves in the smaller chairs around the prince. The caliph gave a signal with his sceptre, and the organ struck up a lively note. The red men fell prostrate before their chief, shout-

ing: "Allah! Allah!" while the assemblage in the pit responded at the top of their voices: "God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet." When this part of the ceremony was ended the caliph arose, and with a loud, harsh voice sang out: "God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet.—Amen." Then in a lower tone he proceeded:

"Subjects all:—Our meeting to-night is of the greatest importance. God has spoken through His Archangel Gabriel to Mahomet, and revealed to me, whose prophet by generation I am, that a revengeful Christian has dared to enter our ranks for the purpose of decoying souls to his accursed religion. What shall we do with him?"

"Let him die," said the red men. Satisfied with this reply, he addressed those in the pit: "What is your will?"

"Hear him, hear him," was the answer of a solitary voice. This was so unexpected that the wonderful old man felt chagrined as he heard the unmistakable reply again repeated, "Hear him."

"Since then, gracious brethren, you would have the prisoner plead his own case, I am willing." The caliph having replaced himself in his great arm-chair as comfortably as possible, the ugly doctor, rendered more unsightly by the beating he had received at the hands of the prisoners, stepped to the footlights, and with a stiff bow to the Irishman, gave him to understand that he must speak in his own behalf. Jeremy nimbly danced a step or two forward as he came to

the middle of the stage. His dress, while not so well arranged as when he entered the Manse, looked, however, neat. His usual coolness of temperament did not forsake him as he sought to gather his scattered thoughts together. He began his defence with the like grace and suavity for which practiced stump orators and Fourth of July speakers are famous. He made a profound bow to the Rabbi, the lady in black, the elders, and the audience:

"This is a great occasion. I am entirely grateful to his highness for givin' me an opportunity to refute the charges laid to me door. In truth, I have no defence to make, as it has been prearranged beforehand that I am to die."

The caliph arose quickly: "The spy has nothing to say. What is your judgment?"

"Kill him," was the response of the red men, while the pit in chorus pleaded, "Hear him."

"Nothing to say; do ye say so, me lad? I'm burstin' for a good talk, so I am, though little me conversation will effect yer black heart, as against every mode of judicial procedure, I'm declared guilty before the trial comes off at all."

"Wretch!" snarled the Rabbi.

"Let him die! let him die!" re-echoed his long-robed retinue.

In imitation of the caliph, Jeremy cried out:

"What sayest the people?" and instantly the reply came back, "Defend thyself!" This declaration tickled the Irishman, and he interrupted the chief,

who was stammering out something to his mystical followers.

"Musha, steady, the people will defend me."

"Aye! aye!" was the response from the pit.

"Well, then, I'm accused of bein' a spy, a thief, and a scoundrel, and the dear knows what. How much nonsense there is contained in these charges the intelligent people in the balcony understand. (Hand clapping and other enthusiastic marks of applause arose from that part of the house). The children present feel that I'm very greatly wronged. (Expressions of 'Ah, yes; poor fellow!' from the orchestra). And I'm thinkin' that if the gentlemen of the jury had half the common sense of the venerable ladies and men above, begorrah, I would be acquitted without judge, jury, or trial."

The gallery shook with hilarious applause, while the whole house, remembering the compliments that had been paid to it by the speaker, joined in the salvo. Rage overpowered the prince. He acted as one devoid of reason. His sceptre performed all sorts of revolutions in the air. A gong sounded violently, and up from the hatchways of the stage marched members of various lodges dressed in their regalia, until they stood a hundred strong, encircling the Grand Master. When quiet was restored, the harsh voice of the Rabbi was heard:

"What will we do with the spy?"

"Hang him," yell the Masons, in one accord.

The young lady in black stepped forward to

where the sexton was posing, and defiantly spoke out:

"Well, sirs, if you hang him you must also hang me."

The red men rushed into the circle with hatchets gleaming high above their heads. At this attempt of treachery, she fell upon the neck of the terrified Jeremy, resolved to die with him. All within the cave stood aghast at the sight, and none more than the doctor. The audience, recovering from their astonishment—seeing the gallantry of the young lady—set up a mighty shout of approval. The prince, too, observing at a glance the sudden change of affairs, shook his sceptre in the same mysterious manner. The organ resounded its sweetest music. Loud through the hollow cavern it resounded, and the arched roof gave back the echoes. The assemblage began to file out. First the black-haired children, then the misses in red, next the old folks—until all had gone except those on the stage. The faces of the red men were growing more exasperated every moment that elapsed; the Masons scowled more fiercely; while the madly-jealous doctor and prince, with murder in their eyes, rushed toward the lady and the Irishman. The prince again raised his sceptre, and a hundred knives glistened in the cave, when lo! the organ gave a final crash and went to pieces. This was immediately followed by a blinding flash of light, accompanied by an explosion that shook the cavern to its centre. The flames dashed out from the roof, the floor, and on all sides. The varied light

reflected a scene like that which Babylon must have presented when it fell, or when Vesuvius poured out its sulphurous contents upon the unfortunate cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. The roof came down with a mighty crash, and all was a scene of indescribable confusion when the young artist appeared on the stage.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOVERS MEET.

WE left the artist swimming to the quay, with the parson and the Jew struggling behind. What became of the two Masons was enshrouded in mystery for over a week. Some one had heard shouts for help near the river's brink, and a few of their most intimate friends set out quietly to drag the river for their bodies. The hats of both men were found, but their bodies were chosen, alas! food for the fishes—so deemed many. There was evidence of a struggle, and it was feared that they might have been waylaid and murdered. To declare the plain truth, no great fuss was made of their disappearance by the community in general, because men of their stamp pass out of this world leaving few to regret their departure. The fact of their whereabouts leaked out to their friends shortly afterward. They would fain keep it concealed, as they were quietly informed that they were safely incarcerated

in the county jail serving a ten days' sentence for disorderly conduct, under assumed names. Thanks to the efforts of a stout policeman, they were rescued from watery graves. The miserly nature of the jew steeled him against his fate, and protected his shekels intact. The reputation of Mr. Long suffered no set-back. He spent his days of confinement unrecognized, but with deep regret at having endeavored to revenge himself on the wily artist. The first movement that Louis made when he saw himself at liberty, was to swim to a great sewer pipe which he hoped might lead him to the Yellow Manse in safety, as it ran in that direction. It was a sudden impulse, and he acted on it at once. There was no time to lose. After a perilous voyage of nearly an hour, he had surmounted all difficulties, and nearly exhausted with fatigue, finally reached the sub-cellar of the Manse. Here in darkness he stumbled about for some time. Minutes seemed hours, until he found the way he desired. He climbed a ladder that conducted him up a precipitous ascent. After landing on the platform above, he groped his way a second time until he found a staircase, which he cautiously descended. At the bottom of this was a door; he opened it, and found that he was behind the organ, where he could view the whole proceedings without being observed. As the trial of the Irishman progressed, he worked with all his might to effect his rescue. Loosening the bolts of the great organ, and having come upon a quantity of Greek powder and calcium light, he was

ready to accomplish his purpose at an opportune moment. He soon realized that the ventriloquistic powers which he had acquired when a boy, might be called into requisition, and he fully realized the design he had intended. When affairs looked extremely critical for Jeremy, he cut off the wind supply of the organ, which caused the first uproar; then with all his force he pulled the main prop from under the mighty instrument, and down it came with a terrible bang. Then followed a tremendous explosion of the powder, and the calcium light served to produce the wonderful effect. Instantly flames followed the report, and a moment later the magnificent tableau was culminated. In the centre were the artist, Angelina and Jeremy, while the Rabbi and his followers stood terrified onlookers. Louis needed only a second to make himself known, and before the horror-striken Masons and red men could interfere, the artist, the lady in black and the Irishman were making their way as fast as possible up the stairs. When they reached the landing they met the children in white, crying bitterly, not knowing where to turn. Jeremy seized both in his brawny arms and descended the ladder, followed by Louis and Angelina. The tramp of footsteps overhead warned them of the approach of their pursuers. No sooner had they landed safely in the cellar than the artist bade them to enter a small anteroom to the right. They had scarcely closed the door than they were startled by angry cries from without. The children screamed hysterically, but

thanks to the soothing tongue of Jeremy, they were quickly quieted.

"Louis, this is a terrible place," Angelina whispered, in a low voice. "Flee for your safety. Your life is in danger, while we are secure. Hark! your murderers are outside."

The lovers listened. The harsh voice of the doctor could be heard above the rest. He was desperate. The Irishman in the meantime had taken things coolly. He found a chair, and seated, with one of the twins on each knee, he was busy hushing them, motherlike, to sleep. When the lovers could hear no further sound of the villains, they began conversing in an undertone.

"Angelina, you wish me to run for my life and leave you behind."

"But, my friend, while I am in no immediate danger, you are. Oh, I implore you, if there is a chance of flight, do not delay."

"Angelina, I have much to ask you ere I depart. First, what is the mystery that enshrouds this house?"

"You ask me a strange question, and I can only answer you in astonishment, and repeat that it is as strange to me as it is to you."

"Do you not know the people and the workings of your own house?"

"Louis, you mock me; my house! This is not my home. I am a prisoner in this terrible place."

"And would you not be rescued?"

"No; not when your life is endangered by so doing."

"Another question, Miss Angelina; who was the old gentleman—a soldier, I believe—whom you attended some years ago when dying?"

The artist saw a tear fall from the beautiful lady's eyes as she uttered, "Only a poor Frenchman."

"My dear, your father still lives to comfort you; do not weep."

"My father! Where? Do you know him? Where does he reside? Oh, that I may see his dear old face again."

"Why, Angelina, is not the old gentleman that rode by your side in the chariot your parent?"

"Oh, horrible! Make no mention of that wonder-making man whose every fibre I hate. He is not my father. No! a villain, Louis, who has done my mother, my father, and all my family a grievous wrong."

"I made a great mistake, darling, but I thought—"

"No! no! he is no relation—a scoundrel. Oh, my father, who lives, God alone knows where! Could I see him again, how happy I would be. Alas! an orphan in the hands of a devil who exercises black art on me and all I hold most dear. Oh! will nobody assist me?"

"Oh, Angelina, I would give all to save you."

"Friend, you can do nothing against the conspiracy that is laid against my country, my family and my God."

"What is it, pray?"

"I understand but meagre details. All that I am

aware of is that a prince of the East, in league with all the secret organizations of the world, aims at the securing of the title of my family and eventually of the throne of France."

"How can that be done?"

"By forcing me to marry him."

"Do you love him?"

"Louis, you strike a heart already broken. Could I love a man who has wrecked my family. He held my mother a prisoner till she died. He may have killed my father. My soul shrinks within me when I consider the circumstance in which I am placed, with no one to help me."

"Oh, Angelina, you grieve me exceedingly. Would I not give my heart's blood for your sake. Do not scorn my offer!"

"Friend, I would accept it if it would be profitable. What will it avail to have your innocent blood shed in my behalf. I dare not accept such a sacrifice. The foes which you would fight, if you enlisted in my cause, are legion. They are the imps of hell in human form, who are plotting the overthrow of my dear country and the placing of a base infidel on the throne."

"Pardon me, Miss, but I don't understand the drift of your remarks."

"The truth is, I am in the power of that magic-working prince, and when I awake from the spell which he casts around me, I am, as it were, in a trance, not knowing whether I am in the land of the living or of the dead."

"I beg you, Angelina, to narrate the facts which these bands of cut-throats are endeavoring to effect."

"They are briefly told. My family is of royal blood, my mother being directly descended from poor Queen Antoinette and Louis the Sixteenth. My father, while only distantly connected with the house of Bourbon, merited all the claims which his kingly valor deserved while acting as general in the defense of his country against the infidels abroad and internal dissensions within. Alas! for the degeneracy of the times, Louis and Antoinette were basely murdered, and the ungodly hands of secret societies that have soaked the soil of their country with the best blood of its citizens, now invited a desperate Moslem to the throne to wield the sceptre. My father, seeing that the kingdom was at an end, put his hopes in Napoleon, trusting that by his mighty power and valor he would bring back the fanatics to their proper senses. Napoleon, the better to carry out his design, took the more desperate class and made them stand the fierce assaults of the demon-working Mahometans. City after city fell before the conqueror in his Eastern campaign, until nearly all were reduced to the yoke. The gods had been thrown from their altars, sanctuaries defiled, and caliphs and petty tyrants made to flee for their lives. In the midst of the desolation that passed over the infidels' country, Prince Omar, the head of the conspiracy, and heir apparent to the throne of Constantinople, was compelled to beat a hasty retreat at the battle of the

Pyramids. He vowed vengeance on the country which had caused his downfall, and to carry out his plans he bound himself by many oaths to the forerunners of all evils—secret societies, that were numerously represented in the French Army. My poor father was signalled out for destruction, for I learned from mother that he was instrumental in defeating the prince, and thereby causing his banishment by his enraged subjects. Oh, if the strong arm of Napoleon were still capable of wielding a sword, or the cause of Louis the Sixteenth able to sustain its claim to royalty, then my country and my people would not have been outrageously treated."

"My dear, what have you to fear?"

"Had you suffered all that I have been forced to undergo, sir, you would not question me thus."

"Ah! you forget that you dwell in a land of the free."

"Am I so free that I can go whither I will? Alas! pent up in this lonely mansion I must linger until death comes to relieve me of life's heavy burden. Would to God that I shared the peace of the happy dead; yet dying I would have to regret that I leave those behind whom he can persecute. Pray, friend, if I may call you such, investigate my father's death if he be dead, and if living, bring him to me. Do you know the good Sister's name that attended the sick man in the hut that you asked me about?"

"She is called Sister Marguerite."

"Marguerite! Oh, a pretty name. Once I had

a sister of that name, and she gave her young life up to her Master serving the sick."

The children were by this time asleep, and the Irishman, fatigued by the weight of his precious darlings, motioned Louis to his assistance. There stood a bed in a corner of the room, and gently the twins were laid upon it without disturbing their sweet slumbers. Angelina stood motionless in the ray of the dim light that was burning low over a three-cornered table. Jeremy saw that the room was only recently occupied, and without intimating the fact to either Louis or Angelina, he quietly barricaded the door more securely. This being done, he joined in the whispered undertones of the lovers. Jeremy was not unknown to the lady in black, and he secretly received many a token through Molly of the existing friendship between them—consequently he needed no introduction. Moreover, he had some questions to ask, and this was his opportunity.

"Well, me lady, 'tis yerself that's in a sorry way, shure enough. The damp cellar will be apt to give ye a cold, so you'd better put this about yer shoulders; you'll find that it will keep you nice and comfortable."

The sexton took off his coat, and while she was unwilling to expose the Irishman to the same danger which he was trying to shield her from, he pressed her so urgently that she accepted it.

"Now, perhaps, me girl, you'll answer a few points that I'd like to find out very much."

"Certainly, Mr. Owens, if I can."

"Who painted those wonderful pictures in the secret chamber?"

"Why, Jeremy, you have not entered there!"

"Of coorse."

"Why did you imperil your life by attempting such a thing?"

"Shure, Miss, I often did the same or worse for a less cause than seeking your interest."

"And what did you hear?"

"Nothing of any importance. They wanted to adopt resolutions expressing their regret at the death of the Rabbi's wife, and shure we wouldn't hear of it."

"Who attempted such a cowardly proposal?"

The Irishman was silent.

"Jeremy, tell me how you knew that my mother was not the wife of the black prince."

"I just reasoned it this way, me girl: I was well acquainted with your mother, and I deemed her almost an angel, and I considered it awful peculiar if her husband was a devil. Besides, it looked very strange, if she were divorced, for if that be true she was no Catholic."

"Your reasoning is correct. She was not the wife of the Rabbi, save in name."

"But the pictures, Miss Angelina?"

"They were painted by my mother from the scenes of the war that my poor father had described to her."

"Is there not some tale connected with them?"

"I judge there is. The prince did not care for sev-

eral of them, and would have destroyed them were it not for the tears and entreaties of my mother."

"They resembled the persons and places I had seen in the initiation that the Masons put me through, and I connected a strange story with them."

"Jeremy, what were the scenes that interested you?"

"Oh, Louis, it was not the paintin's but the truth, which I saw unfolded before me."

"Oh, you were dreaming."

"Perhaps I was, Mr. James, but ye won't be put about if I inquire a little more from yer lady."

Miss Angelina did not notice the remark of the Irishman, couched as it was in such expressive language that made the artist blush.

"Madam, please inform me if your father fought in the East?"

"He was in all the battles of Napoleon."

"Then he was at the Pyramids? That's all."

"No, Jeremy; ask more. I have seen the battle so well depicted by my mother's hand that I am interested."

"Since yer ladyship condescends to give a little account, I will proceed. Your father, God rest his soul wherever he is, didn't belong to the secret orders. Of coorse, he didn't, but I'm askin', to get things straight."

"No, sir; he opposed them with the greatest vigor."

"Shure he did; and if I can believe the history of

France, your country suffered much from these rascals about the period of Danton, Marat, and other fly-aways."

"You are right; but how came you to the conclusion that my father might have belonged to the secret societies?"

"No, I didn't doubt; if I doubted at all I could see yerself, his daughter, a prisoner in this sacret house."

"How did you ascertain that I was a prisoner?"

"If I must be plain, because you never went to church, Mass, or meetin', and bein' of Frinch extraction, I thought it naturally wrong that you would forsake the religion of your ancestors."

Tears rolled from the large beautiful eyes of the lady which she didn't attempt to restrain.

"I see that you have taken a great interest in me, Mr. Owens."

"Perhaps I ought to take more," was the response.

"The truth is, my dear friend, I have been too conservative, and yet my story is summed up in a few words. I am a prisoner—a mystery to my own existence."

"An infidel against your will!"

"Not exactly, Jeremy; but I am prevented from even going across the way to the beautiful church to say as much as a prayer for my poor mother's soul.

"Angelina, she is not forgotten; the clergymen beyant pray daily for her."

"Ah, they are good men. May heaven reward them; I cannot. That venerable old gentleman is a real saint. He came at once when that poor countryman of mine lay dying, five years ago. Who is the young priest?"

"Father Delon."

"What, a Frenchman! Yes; I suppose from the City of Paris, my dear home."

"Madam, are there great high churches and towers in the city?"

"It is noted for the loftiness and grandeur of its dwellings and public buildings. I remember well, that close to far-famed Notre Dame rose our mansion, and a more inspiring edifice could not have been seen."

"Is your home still standing?"

"No; it was destroyed by the allies of Europe under Bleucher."

"Can you recall any of the facts that occurred during the conflagration?" inquired the artist, excitedly.

"Only a few, Louis. A portion of the rear battalion composed of Turks and Arabs, destroyed our home, while they left others intact."

"Confound them! I thought as much," bitterly remarked the artist."

"And so did I, Louis."

"Why, Jeremy, how came you by these facts?"

"Only a dream," slyly rejoined the sexton, which the artist feigned not to notice.

"Revenge was at the bottom of that cowardly act."

"I think so, Louis; my father would have perished by the leaders hand had not my darling mother rescued him."

"The rascal gave your father an awful gash."

"Mr. Owens!"

"Well, me lady, I'm wonderin' at all I've learned."

"Oh, dear friends, my family suffered much from that fatal hour. I was too young to understand all that happened. My mother—poor martyred soul—has been the victim of foul abuse. She died broken-hearted. Oh, that terrible accident. Oh, my mother, you kept the secret of my life from me! I knew something was wrong, but I was a mere child, and in my imagination I deemed all was right; but there was a big mistake, and I found this out as I grew to womanhood. I pleaded with mother to tell me what mystery hung over our household, but the more I asked her and pressed her to tell, she wept and said: 'My child, you will one day learn.' Alas! she died with her lips sealed. Here I am left a mystery to myself and my own existence. From words that now and then escaped her lips, she wished that nothing would be made manifest until everything was cleared away and our fallen family raised to their proper social standing. My anxiety has grown keener each day since her death. I know not how to repel the thoughts that bewilder my brain and harrow up my heart. Am I an outcast, or a rejected heir, or what? What is the secret I wish to know? What has become of my father?"

She had no sooner concluded this sad appeal than a disturbance arose outside. Dread came over the lovers, and while the Irishman felt a little worried, he was gradually becoming more accustomed to the severe trials that beset him on his mission. He quickly whispered something in the ear of Louis and hastened to the door. Without the Masons were swearing and howling like demons. Several sharp blows from their axes brought the door down with a crash. The Irishman could see by the glare of the lanterns which they carried, that they had imbibed too freely. The ugly red-headed doctor was leading the drunken mob. They entered the room. Jeremy mingled with his companions undiscovered, and with consummate boldness walked rapidly through the midst of them and whispered something in the blear-eyed physician's ear. The word had its effect.

"They have fled; let us seek them elsewhere."

At their captain's command the Masons staggered back out of the apartments—the red-headed butcher alone remaining behind.

"Now for that interview, Owens. Where is she?" pleaded the Mason.

"Right forninst you; see where the little window lets in the light."

The homely man gazed in the direction pointed out, and saw that he was not deceived.

"Do ye see her?"

"Yes," he shouted, at the top of his voice.

He would have repeated the exclamation of surprise

and delight had not he felt the grip of the sexton's hands about his throat. Jeremy remarked unconcernedly: "She is busy telling the young artist how she loves him, but mind ye, he don't care a half-penny for her, and as for meself, she jilted me so often that ye needn't worry about me."

The deceptive language of the Irishman put the doctor off his guard. He believed that Owens had no interest in her, and while Miss Angelina was conversing low but earnestly with the artist, he in turn seemed not to pay the slightest attention to her. Angelina was indeed wondering at the coolness with which Louis heard her repeat some of the more interesting details of her life. A moment ago, and he would have lingered on every word; now he let sentence after sentence pass from one ear to the other without showing any concern whatsoever. Louis, however, was sorely disconcerted. He was too much of a straightforward character to instruct Angelina to play a false rôle. It was all well enough for himself to act the hypocrite, but no, he could not suffer his darling to do the same. He was too much of a lover to play a farce. Moreover, he was not sure that she would place her affections on the love-crazed doctor, and he therefore resolved to let her enact the part she wished to choose for herself. There was no doubt in the sexton's mind that she hated the doctor. He had supplicated in vain for her love. She trembled violently for the sake of her real lover, when the blood-thirsty Masons

battered down the door, and she still felt uneasy by the fact that within the room was one whom she could not look upon except with scorn. The lovers still conversed in an undertone, while Jeremy and the physician declared their respective opinions quite loud.

"So your family came to America after the downfall of Napoleon?"

"Yes, Louis; we settled in Maryland, where my father engaged in farming."

"Was this his particular intention in coming hither?"

"I don't think so, for some rumor got abroad that my dear mother was attached to some other man. O treacherous plotting, born and bred of the revolutionary movement. We lived there but a brief period, when Teresa and Lucile, my darling little sisters, were born. Shortly after their birth, I saw the peace of our home was once more disturbed, and I have since solved the problem. An Eastern magician once visited us during father's absence. He pleaded with my mother to run away and marry him. She refused, and he threatened her life. One night when my father had gone a distance from home on business—now nearly six years ago—we were all kidnapped, and from that day we have been prisoners of the Manse."

While she was narrating her history Louis forgot to act in the manner prescribed by Jeremy, and instead of showing a listless disregard for what she said, he was all attention to his pretty sweetheart.

The doctor was every moment growing more jealous.

"You promised me," he at last broke out, "an interview ; go and obtain it. I live only for her."

The ugly individual spoke so earnestly that every word that he uttered was accompanied by a gesture of the hands.

"Hush ! you must remain cool when you may have the pleasure of meeting the delicate little creature ; or if you go on with these queer pranks, you'll frighten the life out of her in this apartment. Now there is every chance of meetin' the lady, but one."

"Name it, sir."

"Show me the way out of this infernal hole."

"My oath, my oath. I have sworn," replied the Mason.

"Well, if ye have made up yer mind to keep the oath, then, to be shure, I'll not break me promise. Bother with ye and yer swearin' ; don't ye know by this time that I've got as good a hold as the devil on ye, and between us both, some of us are bound to get ye."

"Ha!" scornfully mocked the doctor.

"No ha ! about it. Put up yer hands, er I'll waive all claim to yer carcass and let the devil have ye now."

The physician realized that he was a prisoner in his own room with a revolver placed in close proximity to his head.

"Mercy !" he cried.

"Bedad, I'll show ye none unless ye first show me the way out of this cellar."

"I will—only on one condition."

"Well, such impudence! Ye made some stiff ones when I was in jail, but I'm boss now, and ye have no choice."

"Spare me, sir, and grant me an interview with Madam Angelina."

"Point out the way that leads to the pure air of heaven."

"Straight ahead to the left, where you will meet a long, narrow hall, which you will enter until you come to a door; open it and descend the staircase, which will conduct you to the elevator. Pull the rope, and this will bring you to the cupola, which you can descend by means of the ladder outside to the street. Come, I will show you."

"Och, never mind that."

"As you have got your demand, permit me to speak with my darling for a few minutes."

"Certainly," replied the sexton.

At that moment a disturbance was heard without, and it was impossible to hear a word, so loud were the imprecations of the lodge members. The twins were awakened, and screaming with fright ran to the arms of Jeremy. The fury of the contestants was irresistible. Knives clashed together and dismal groans resounded through the dark cellar. The doctor rushed out, and the Masons, mistaking him for Jeremy, gave him a severe drubbing. Some of the fighters fell through the battered door.

"Hide, Louis," shrieked Miss Angelina; but she

had fainted dead away in his arms, and he would not leave her in such a state surrounded by a crowd of vagabonds. The Masons hunted everywhere around the room. The Irishman was descried hiding behind a pillar, and taking a tighter hold on his precious darlings, he made a dash for liberty. His pursuers followed close upon his heels. As they disappeared into the darkness, the dim light on the table reflected a terrible scene. The physician painfully lifted himself from among his wounded companions, and seeing the artist holding Miss Angelina in his arms, made a desperate lunge at him with his thin-pointed knife.

The light went suddenly out, and the last fading glimmer saw Louis defending himself with incomparable skill.

CHAPTER IX.

LITTLE BY LITTLE THE DEVILTRY COMES TO LIGHT.

EVERYTHING was pleasant around the rectory after the rain of the night. The flowcry blossoms were fresh and beautiful, and their odor-bearing petals exhaled the morning breeze that came up from the old river. The garden was small though beautiful. Roses red and white hung from full green round bushes. A lily here and there, as modest as a maiden at prayer, stood high over pink and orange blossoms. The pathways of grass were neatly trimmed. The clustering vines that

graced the walls of the church hung carelessly over the carriage way of broken stone which lead to the last resting-place of man in this valley of death—the grave-yard. In a word, all things showed what a careful hand Jeremy had exercised as sexton of St. Mary's. The graves in the burying ground were well banked, and over them many fading flowers expressed how much the mourners thought of the person now laid to rest, and now told at the same time how the sweetest memories fade away and are forgotten. Here and there, where no trinket of remembrance had been put, the good-natured Jeremy planted a bush or tree. Nearby the river stood the white-haired pastor. He was deeply meditating. Many a year he saw the tide rise and fall. He gazed sorrowfully upon the white headstones glistening in the sunlight, and felt within his bosom how heavy, indeed, was the cold hand of Death.

"'The elixir of life was only a figment, the philosopher's stone a myth; but after all, Death was a certainty. How happy is the thought of resurrection. Man shrinks from the companionship of the dead. Christ alone gives surety of life eternal.' Oh, wretched man, who has tumbled into a narrow cell of clay with no hope of a future beyond its bounds! To die and live no more—surely that cannot be! A Christian realizes that he has to die, but his confidence, as he enters on his last sleep, is placed in God. He embraces the pillow of stone and silently draws over him his mantle of clay; he hopes and prays to awake

in a better life. The changeful tide of life is always filled with sadness. The sun rises, and ere it sets, a friend has fallen into the grave. And yet the current of the old river passes on from hour to hour, only to eventually return again. 'How sad it is! Yet we must concede the fact that while all things change, none cease to be ; man alone must fall to rise no more.' The stars that lighted the heavens when Christ was born still reflect their glimmering shadows upon the snow of winter. The mountains in the far-off West that stand peering aloft into the clouds, seem to defy the powers of disintegration. Here we have seen them for many a year unchanged by the hard hand of Time. The trees, with their diversified foliage, droop not to the heat of summer nor to the cold of winter, but stand firmly with imperturbable grandeur and protest against the elements that would annihilate them. 'Thus we see the stern fixity of Nature, while every day we behold the utter decay of Man, the superior of all things. What, then, is Death —that terrible separation which breaks asunder the vital ties of spirit and matter? To live, to die and be no more—surely this cannot be!' We further know that while all things change, none cease to exist. 'The glorious sunburst that hangs resplendent over the green valley in the morning, sinks to rest when the sable shroud of night falls upon the solemn old ocean. The newly-conceived bud that breathes by the gentle touch of spring, is born and blooms forth and is nourished by the gentle air of summer. The

varied-colored leaves of the bushes and the brown impurpled leaves of the trees that make the rich months of autumn, slowly but certainly yield to the cold and chilly blasts of winter, and thus seasons succeed each other, year gives place to year—a century rolls by as naturally as day follows night—only to rise again triumphant over Death.' But who can believe that while gross materialism is indestructible, man, the master of matter, is born to live, to die and live no more; that cannot be. The hope of man is founded on truth eternal, which shines forth in tempest and in calm with unsurpassed splendor."

These were the thoughts that occupied the mind of the rector as he strolled through the churchyard to his dwelling. He paused for a moment, and looking up, saw a crowd in the street in front of the rectory. He hurried to the parlor, and as he did so an ambulance drove quickly up. The driver and a policeman lifted a man out, and two children followed them into the priests' house. They were weeping bitterly. A few minutes conversation in which the pastor and officers indulged, and the ambulance was driven away, the crowd dispersing. As soon as the injured man lifted the handkerchief from off his face, behold! there was the Irishman—a mass of bruises.

"Have you been spreeing this fortnight, Jeremy?"

"Och, Father alive, I've been an the outlook, and met with a great deal of good luck and naturally with a bit of bad luck."

"Pshaw!" said the pastor, trying to suppress a smile,

"I am thinking you have fallen ignobly from your post."

"From a post, yer riverence; it was a mighty big post."

The features of the Irishman were certainly badly battered. He was a wreck; so much so, that Father Rogers could not help smiling at his ridiculous appearance.

"How came you to get these injuries?"

"Shure, I fell half the length of the sky, and nearly killed the children."

"Who are they, Jeremy?"

The sexton gasped two or three times, and then addressed the rector.

"Yer riverence, please take care of these pretty darlings, for an evil omen hangs over them. Give them to Sister Marguerite."

The superioress of the convent was at that time coming from the sacristy, and the kind pastor gave the two pretty twins into her charge. The little ones seemed pleased with their new guardian, and likewise the gentle nun took a great interest in them. When they had departed Jeremy narrated in a low whisper all that had happened in the Yellow Manse.

"And are you sure, Jeremy, that you were sober all the time?"

"Why, bless yer riverence's soul, I haven't tasted a drop of spirituous drink since, side by side with Louis, I promised the nun I wouldn't."

"If such be the case, you have been the victim of a sad delusion."

"Oh, would that I were, Father dear, then when I'd awake from it I would find meself safe and sound; but as shure as the cuts are on me face, so true are all the details I have told you."

"Why did you take the children with you?"

"To keep the innocent crathures from harm's way. Their lives were indeed in danger at the hands of murderous Masons."

"You acted properly now, how did you receive the bruises?"

"Well, Father, I landed safely on top of the cupola, and commenced me descent quickly, when I lost me footin', and down I came with a thud."

"How did the children escape?"

"Of coorse, I held them above me head, and bent me head, and a fearful thumping it got before it rested aisy on the ground."

"Ah! Jeremy, at first I doubted your story, but I have learned since you began that I erred. You have done noble work in trying to solve the Mystery of the Yellow Manse. Perhaps in a week or so, when your wounds are healed and you are completely rested you may clear it up altogether"

"Father, would you have me lay up at me aise when Louis is in danger of his life?"

"Where is he, Jeremy?"

"A prisoner, like I was meself, across the way."

"Oh, this is dreadful. He was here yesterday and

told me of your peril, and now you have come to inform me of his danger. I am fearful of some dreadful mishap befalling either of you, and yet I cannot discourage you in your workings."

At this juncture the curate put in his appearance. A look of terror spread over his countenance as he gazed at the disfigured face of his friend the sexton.

"Oh, you, too, have suffered from the evils that beset the Manse."

"Slightly, Father Delon. How did you come by this piece of news?"

"Oh, I had a presentiment—a dream ; never mind just at present; my brain is so muddled up that I cannot explain. The mystery of that accursed house has so worked on me that I am not able to account for anything. I have imagined strange forebodings, and I shall never rest content until I have found some sequel to them."

"Oh, George, such weird creatures that you have pictured to yourself have no existence outside of your troubled mind," said the pastor, smiling.

"Let us account for the tale that is over our heads at present, then a little later, yours, too, will receive proper attention."

"Oh, Father, you are furnishing me with false hopes to build on. The Mystery of the Yellow Manse is unsearchable ; to try to solve it, under the circumstances, is futile."

"Oh, don't say that, Father ; shure we are workin' on it with great success. Little by little the deviltry of

the place is comin' to light, and I'm thinkin that the whole sacret shall burst out before our eyes some fine day as the glorious sunshine breaks out over the mists in Dublin Bay. Why be so disturbed?"

"Jeremy, a mystery no less dark conceals the pleasure of life from me."

"We are a queer set—hardly less so than the people beyant, and pardon me for sayin' so."

The rector opened his large blue eyes wide with astonishment as the curate manifested an inkling of his life to the sexton, and he was still more surprised when a moment later he drew forth a scrap of paper and read its contents aloud:

"I, Doctor Herman Ludovice, of the army of Napoleon, do hereby transfer perpetually all the claims and rights of my infant son George into your possession, Most High Caliph and Prince Omar of the Dynasty of Mahomet. Signed, Dr. Ludovice."

The curate handed the strange note to the pastor, and having re-read it carefully, delivered it to the young priest.

"Where did you come across this piece of information?" queried the rector.

"While looking over some papers belonging to my adopted mother, I found it entangled in some hair. This discovery has led me to suspect that I might be the son of the doctor."

"Do you know anything of this man?" again asked the old priest.

"Nothing," was the laconic reply.

Father Rogers felt like investigating further, but he did not wish to pester him in his disturbed state of mind. Jeremy, usually fluent when there was a desire of information, held his tongue as he considered how strange the world really is. The conversation after some time reverted to the wonderful old building, and we leave Jeremy to repeat his escapade, to interview the beloved twins.

None of the sadness which overwhelmed the parochial residence was apparent in the convent. The twins—Lucile and Teresa, as they were endearingly called—brightened up that household as it had not been before for many a day, with their merriment and jollity. The charming little pair were the counterpart of each other. The same little black eyes and hair, dark, round, fat faces, dresses of light material, identical expression of tone of laughter and conversation—in a word, they so closely resembled each other that it was very difficult to tell them apart. The nuns, to distinguish one from the other, tied a blue piece of ribbon on Teresa's ring. This done, after filling the convent with their laughter and their witty sayings, Teresa sang as sweetly as a bird. Her charming voice so delighted the Sisters, that they asked her to sing something else, but the little rascal slipped her ribbon to Lucile when waltzing around, and no sooner had the nuns asked for a second song than Lucile shrieked out something that was perfect discord. The good Sisters knew not what to make of her, as she went on as inharmoniously as she had begun, and finally conclud-

ed in the same discordant key. The child sang so sweetly before, and now so earnestly, and yet so bad, that they were completely nonplussed, and why not? Lucile could not sing a note. Then feeling that she had not shown the ability that was in her, she proudly marched to the piano and played a charming rôle of pieces that the Sisters were loath to interrupt. Her nimble fingers danced over the keys, and the music that came from the instrument proved that gifted hands struck the notes. She ended amidst a profusion of compliments, and Teresa moved to make up her part in deceiving the Sisters, and in her angel-like voice sang two more songs so symphoniously and sweetly as a Cecilian must have sung. The nuns looked for the ribbon, and finding that it was missing, laughed heartily at the joke that was so skilfully played upon them. The bell rang for dinner, and the charming twins, after partaking of the dainties that had been prepared for them, grew drowsy and were put to bed by Sister Innocentia. All the afternoon, while the little darlings slept, the younger Sisters were good-naturedly mimicking their antics. The nuns were busy sewing, but the songs that Teresa sang still sounded so sweetly in their ears that they could not refrain from humming snatches of them, and likewise from moving their feet as they seemed to hear the lively airs of Lucile repeated. Some declared that Teresa had the sweetest disposition, while others said that Lucile was a more out and out child, and consequently, the more agreeable. The opinions

were equally divided in favor of each; all were unanimous in asserting the two were the nicest, sweetest children they had ever met. During the afternoon Sister Innocentia called on her dear old mother in her room.

"Where have those pretty pets come from, Sister?" was her first inquiry.

"They say that they live in the Yellow Manse, and when I questioned them about their name they simply replied 'Teresa' and 'Lucile'; further than this they did not know. They have stirred up fresh and strange thoughts in my mind."

"Oh, good mother, you are always thinking queerly," laughed the sweet-faced nun.

"Could I see Jeremy, he might have some news from the old house that would relieve me from the sorrow that is weighing down my life to the grave."

A step was heard in the hall-way, and the little nun admitted the poor wounded Irishman.

"Why, Jeremy, what has happened to you?"

"Oh, nothing ails me but a few scratches which I got from a fall."

The sexton's demeanor quieted the excitement that was rising in the mind of Sister Marguerite.

"Any news to-day, Mr. Owens?"

"None but the best."

He told the superioress the outline of the work that had been accomplished. This, however, afforded but little comfort to the afflicted soul; nothing would satisfy her, short of revealing the whole mystery.

To the meditative mind that gazed on the gray walls of the convent, nothing save peace and contentment reigned within. Worriment, however, pursues well-nigh every soul, and it seems to follow with peculiar terror those who are inclined to do good and practice virtue. Virtue and vice are tried in the furnace of trouble. Vainly do some seek perfect happiness in this life. The glamour of worldly greatness raises the thoughts of the ambitious man; the gloss of riches attracts the miserly heart; but the vast majority, seeing the folly of human happiness, either hope or despair in a life beyond the grave to reward them with perfect consolation. It must not be said that the present life contains no comfort, no joy. There is in this world a great deal of pleasure, yet not, however, bountifully enough to supply the cravings of the human heart. Heaven alone can do this. The bell for supper resounded through the cloister. The twins were awake, and as gay and as pretty as ever, prattling and dancing about the dining-room. Jeremy saw them, but he did not interrupt their play. All through the meal the young couple laughed and joked, and the fun was increased by the way the nuns joined in. Teresa sang several songs during the recreation that followed, while Lucile played as grandly as ever. The time flew past quickly, until it was the hour for prayer and repose. High over the convent walls arose the silvery moon and peered through the lofty church tower. The shadows of night fell softly and gently upon the little Catholic grave-yard. How sad

it is to gaze upon the simple headstone that recalls the memory of a dear departed friend! Here the beams fell upon the grave of a young maiden snatched away in the pride of youth and beauty. On a little further down the pathway, they showed the plain wooden crosses, beneath which many a hero sleeps, unknown to popular fame. Old and young are laid within its consecrated bosom awaiting the judgment day. Death is certainly a ruthless destroyer. Life gives all; death takes all away. The old river winds its crooked course sad and alone. No boat of any kind sails upon its white, silvery tide. The lights of the factories alone relieve the solemn aspect. Here men are toiling midst flame and smoke. The prophecy of Our Lord is fulfilled: "Thou shalt earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow." Half naked, they worked from early morn till late at night, and all for what? The food and the clothes they needed. While Nature reposes in its wonderful course, man alone knows no rest until he sleeps in the bosom of his Creator. The tenements in the neighborhood appeared now more than ever to show forth their spectral form in the moonlight. Thousands of men, women and children breathed one another's breath in a few acres of land, and yet all was as silent throughout the night as if they were inhabited by people from the land of Death. The sun rose blood-red, and slowly the waning moon disappeared behind the mountains that were bathed in a heavy mist, looking with friendly eye on the winding course of the old river as it

settled to repose. The crowing of roosters and the yelping of dogs told the weary sleepers that they must soon rouse themselves from their slumbers to a day of toil. Noisy wagons hobbled through the streets on the heavy pavements. The shop whistles sounded a dismal greeting to the poor laborer's ears, and another day's work was commenced. Fathers Rogers and Delon were celebrating their masses before the hour of seven, and none of those present prayed with greater fervor than the ever faithful Jeremy. After the Holy Sacrifice had been offered up for the living and the dead, the sexton still lingered to pray especially for those he loved, and for the successful issue of the task that Louis and himself had undertaken; namely, of revealing the Mystery of the Yellow Manse. When at length he had satisfied his heart's devotion, he made his way, and indeed, with no small difficulty, to the priests' refectory, where he was in the habit of dining. To the inquiries made by the clergymen regarding his health, he did not hesitate to tell them how in reality he was feeling. "Bless ye, me friends, but a man don't know the use of his head till he loses it."

A smile passed over the genial features of the rector as he chid him. "I am glad, Jeremy, you have found out that a sound head is the best part of man, and I trust that in future your experience shall have taught you a wholesome lesson."

"Och, yer riverence, will ye never let go an opportunity to hit me on a soft spot. I have an engage-

ment to fulfil, and never mind scolding me about the weakness of many a good man."

"I thought," interrupted the pastor, "that the task was to be performed last night."

"It was, but I reasoned with a bit of philosophy. If Louis survived the first shock, I'm satisfied Miss Angelina would die or defend him at the next onset; and she's too precious to be led to the slaughter at once, and as long as she survives, remember, Louis lives."

"Suppose the doctor made away with him and her."

"Oh, Father Delon, that rascal will consider a bit before he takes so much on his hands, and I'll be there to-night, and if he tries any of his funny games upon me, I'll cool him down, let me tell you. It is now nearly time to think what I am to do."

"How will you gain entrance?" questioned the French priest.

"Oh, I'll have 'sarrah' bit of trouble to-day, and, begorrah, if the devil himself attempts to drive me out of the house before I discover the sacret, not a bit of me will move for his majesty. Father Delon, me plan is this: I'll dress in the garb of an old soldier, and bring the children with me. There ain't much use in disfigurin' me face; shure you would think I met the charge of Napoleon at Waterloo; and I thought meself when I bumped me head on the ground in me flight from the chimney, that I put me head in the mouth of a cannon by accident. Well, as I was sayin',

havin' got a kind reception for bringin' back the children, I'll stop over night, or me name is not Jeremy Owens." Having concluded, the Irishman walked like a soldier who had met the enemy in many a hard encounter, and hastily entered a side room. It was not long before he re-appeared, dressed in an old army suit of French pattern. The pants were somewhat lengthy and narrow, but the sexton made good use of the scissors, and he finally contrived to get into them without looking too ungainly. The coat fitted somewhat better than the pantaloons, but you could see at first glance that it was not bought to decorate the person of the Irishman. His hat was of the slouch kind, but entirely too small, and sat jauntily on his bandaged crown. To the eyes of the clergyman, he was a grotesque sight; yet had they not known him, he might have passed as a veteran who fought at Austerlitz. As they watched him go over to the convent, they saw that his make-up was excellent. When he knocked at the door of the cloister Sister Marguerite came to the summons.

"What is your business, please?"

"I want to speak to yerself."

"Your name?"

"Oh, don't you see Jeremy Owens, the sexton of St. Mary's, right forninst ye."

The nun stood back in amazement until the Irishman explained matters. Sister Innocentia soon brought the twins. They clutched the apron of the superioress, frightened at the appearance of the old soldier in

his regimentals. Sister Innocentia glanced sharply at the man, and smiled pleasantly as she recognized the face of the good-natured Irishman hidden away behind a swathe of linen. The children grew less afraid as they saw the Sisters discoursing familiarly with the soldier. They soon recognized his voice.

"Well, me darlints, will ye come with Jeremy?"

"What Sisters say, we'll do," replied Teresa.

"We would rather stay, mister, because we like it so much here."

"Children, you will go with this gentleman; he will bring you back again. Don't be afraid, he will take good care of you."

The Sisters having spoken thus in so motherly a way, kissed each; and the twins running into Jeremy's arms, and as he stooped down they embraced him affectionately. The Sisters having bade adieu to the kind-hearted Irishman, watched him as he walked through the grave-yard, until he was lost among the high monuments of the dead.

CHAPTER X.

THE EASTERN PRINCE.

WHEN the Masons saw the object of their search before them, those who were able to move forgot their private brawl, and seeing the Irishman running as fast as he could toward the narrow hallway, darted in pursuit. Here was a race for

life. Although Jeremy was heavily handicapped, he dashed on at a rapid gait. Upstairs and down he ran, stumbling, falling now and then on his knees, to recover himself in an instant, only to flee again with a more rapid stride for freedom. He heard the curses of his pursuers ringing in his ears in the gloomy passage. This only served to urge him on the faster. Thanks to the number that attempted his capture, the Irishman was enabled to make a decided gain on the foremost, for they kept bowling one another over in their mad flight. The leaders, essaying to have the honor of the arrest, strove to outdo the others, consequently, when they were on even terms they elbowed each other so fiercely that the first man fell and three over him, till all rolled down a flight of ten or more steps. Quick as had been the movements of the sexton, he had grasped the rope of the elevator none too soon. It had risen just out of their grasp when they made vigorous efforts to get hold of it; but up went the Irishman out of reach amidst a volley of oaths. They staggered back through the long, crooked corridor and stairways to the room whence they had started, burning with rage at the thought of the escape of him whom they considered must surely be their prisoner. No sooner did they reach the dark apartment than they saw the blear-eyed doctor make a deadly lunge at Louis. The latter, though holding the swooning Angelina in his arm, successfully parried the blow by a quick turn of the body. Before the frantic physician could attack him a second time, he

had secured one of the knives of the drunken brothers that lay at his feet. The red scoundrel recoiled, and heard the semi-conscious rebuke of the lady as she answered his plea. "Ah, madam, you have deceived me; you love another."

"Deceived you! I could not have done so. I told you a thousand times I hate you. You threatened my life, but your own would be put in the balance if you laid your murderous hand on me."

"O Angelina, I have knelt at your feet for the past five years, and you have not returned my affections as you should have done. You ought to be aware that my life is not worth living without you. Do not let me despair; bid me hope; and I will wait for ten years—aye, twenty, if you will then consent to be my bride."

"Do not persist in your foolishness. I declare once and forever, you cannot hope to gain any more than my friendship, strive in what manner you will; so depart from my presence at once."

"Madam, I will leave at my pleasure, and you shall do likewise only with my consent, for, understand well, you are my prisoner. Thwart me not with your friendship; I want your love; I shall have that, or your life."

The glassy eyes of his drunken companions shone around him on every side, but none gleamed so demon-like as his. Some grinned at his love-making, others cursed merely for the sake of so doing, while all who were awake stared at the pale face of the artist with

treachery. The doctor approached nearer to the trembling maiden.

"Swear to me that you will love me, and me alone; no other, or, God be a witness, you shall die."

His red ferret eyes flashed fire, while he ground his teeth with rage. The young lady began to fear for her life, but she nevertheless bore up spiritedly as her lover stepped face to face with her would-be assailant, who, filled with cowardice, stepped several feet back.

"Sir," spoke the artist, "if this lady met your proposals with approval, I would disdain to interfere in your concerns; but since she scorns alike your protestations and insults, if you make an attempt to coerce her into a marriage I will kill you."

"Ha! ha! prisoner, do you not realize that you are in my power?"

"You could not exercise any control over me whatsoever were it not for your many supporters."

"Speak no more, or else you shall feel the weight of iron fetters on your delicate limbs."

"Villain, it matters little whether I am bound hand or foot to a dungeon or not; while my tongue is loose I will choose to speak, or let it alone, as I wish."

"You dog!" snarled the physician; but he did not complete what he desired to say, for with the alacrity of a cat the artist was upon him, and with a peculiar sharp swing, coupled with a clever action of the foot, he gave the red-headed Mason a fall that resounded through the great dismal chamber. Stunned

by the shock, the doctor sought to rise, but the young painter, throwing away his knife, flung his whole weight upon him.

"Retract that word, or I'll choke you!"

The struggling scoundrel craved pardon, but meant treachery. As quickly as Louis lifted him to his feet and turned away, the would-be penitent rushed upon him with a firm grip on his knife. The artist was taken off his guard, and an instant later was lying on his back, with the enraged Mason on his chest. The latter raised his dagger, but Angelina snatched it away, cutting a deep gash in his hand. Wild with pain and liquor, he seized Louis by the throat. Then commenced a sharp struggle. The contestants were encircled on all sides by the riotous lodge members, who boisterously cheered every advantage that their fellow gained. There was one friend of Louis' present, and that was Angelina. She watched the encounter with intense excitement, and seeing that her lover, who was at a great disadvantage, was getting far the worse of the contest, advanced toward the brutal physician and pushed him to one side. Louis lay gasping for breath, and before the doctor could return to finish his dastardly job, she partly lifted, partly dragged her lover away to one corner of the apartment. The doctor, goaded on by the wound he had received and the shouts of his fellow-Masons, seized with firmer hold the knife which he ever had ready, and ran to where the artist lay. Angelina boldly met his fierce onset, and seized him by the

arm. He broke from her, only to be grasped pluckily again. The terrible contest was fast overcoming her sensitive nature. All courage died within her as she prevented this second attack, and she would have fallen had not the artist arisen with almost superhuman courage and offered her support. Mad with jealousy, the blood-thirsty Mason rushed forward to dispatch both with the dagger. It was now Louis' turn to defend Angelina. Her rejected lover made a mortal thrust at her heart, but the artist received it deeply in the arm. The blood spurted over the black gown of Angelina and on the white shirt of Louis. It was a ghastly picture, from which less timid souls would shrink in horror, but that desperate lot of individuals had a suitable representative in their maddened leader to do any work, no matter how bloody. The doctor was determined to complete his job, and now the artist saw the peril in which he found himself and his beloved companion. Leaving her standing behind him, he gallantly confronted his assailant, unarmed. A loud laugh of mingled scorn and surprise came from the throats of the drunken brutes as they saw the young man deliver a stinging blow on their member's cheek. This only had the effect of inciting on the angry demon with greater impulse. As he raised his knife, they closed together. The artist tightly clutched the arm that held the weapon. Both were wounded. They wrestled and tugged at each other in their deadly clinch until the veins of their throats and foreheads stood out like whipcords.

First one and then the other had an advantage, until at length the young painter with a mighty effort wrenched the dagger from his antagonist, and hurling it to the earth, he struck his opponent two or three times in rapid succession, under the force of which the doctor's knees bent and he fell in a heap in the corner, to dream, perhaps, unpleasant dreams. The gallantry of the young lad in refusing to use his knife when he had his antagonist at his mercy saved him his life. Some of those present took his part, while the majority vociferously condemned their manner of acting by cursing and swearing. Then was renewed the tumultuous scene of the early evening, until all lay groaning on the floor or had fled.

Oh, happy would it have been for the lovers if they could have then made good their escape from that horrid dwelling. They wondered what had become of the Irishman and the children. When the snoring of the drunken wretches alone disturbed the quiet of the cellar, Louis whispered:

"Do you know nothing of these strange apartments, Angelina?"

"No, Louis; absolutely nothing about the place down here."

"Then we can only rely on assistance from without."

"But who is aware of our circumstances?"

"Jeremy certainly is, Angelina."

"But suppose he is dead, or has fled from the building."

"If dead, God will provide for us; if living and outside, he will return, and his ready wit and disguise shall gain him admission to us."

"O God! grant that he may soon come to our aid; but I fear he will be interrupted, as a stricter surveillance, no doubt, is placed upon the house. Oh, how dreadful if he has fallen by the assassin's knife! Oh, where are my darling sisters?"

"Rest assured, Angelina, they are safe; and how often has not our devoted friend escaped their murderous strokes."

"Louis, he could not have escaped; your life is in danger here; don't protect me longer. I can die without regret."

A century seemed to have elapsed since the sudden ending of the trial, and yet not much longer than twenty-four hours went by. A day and part of a night of horror followed patient watching on the part of the lovers, who, of all the inmates of the room, alone were awake. Suddenly among the sleeping Masons appeared a dim light, and behold! there was the doctor, covered with blood—a hideous looking sight—gazing into the faces of the sleepers. A cry of terror broke from the girl's lips that revealed their concealment. The searcher, startled by the voice, lifted his grimy countenance, and lo! before him stood the soldier, whose disguise suited the occasion admirably! For some minutes they viewed each other in utter amazement. Jeremy stretched forth his hand and shook the Mason's wounded member so warmly that the latter hissed a curse under his breath.

"Don't ye know me, old boy. Shure it takes a dacent man to know a devil wherever he meets him."

The doctor thought that he had a drunken fellow to contest with, and proceeded anew with his search. Jeremy staggered after him.

"What are ye about?"

"Confound your prying impudence! you ask questions that don't concern you in the least. Did you not see me worsed by that infernal spy, and is it thus you mock me?"

"Oh, I see, yer searching for him; go ahead, and I'll watch for him, too. Where do you think he is?"

"Dead, I suppose; I want his carcass."

The physician passed on from one sleeper to another, glancing fiercely at each in turn. The Irishman's heart beat wildly as he considered the possible sad fate of his friend; and he, too, observed the physiogomy of each Mason sprinkled with gore, in hopes of first reaching Louis. An occasional groan made him shudder. Their nasal organs made a dismal sounding orchestra. Some laughed sardonically in their sleep, while others painfully moaned. While the doctor and the sexton were bent on their voyage of discovery, a light flashed suddenly around them. The darkness which overshadowed the dungeon disappeared, and a light blue sky, tinged by the golden streaks of the setting sun, arose overhead. The faces of the sleepers presented a sickly aspect, for on all stood a deep sense of dread. Their bodies turned and twisted into every conceivable shape. Two great white-peaked

mountains raised their lofty tops above vast clouds that rose in the western horizon. As quickly as the piercing rays of the sun reflected on their stately heads, they began to belch out fire and smoke. Down came the fiery lava, sweeping trees, stones and earth and whatever was in its path. A flood of molten metal surged about the dreaming wretches, and when everything was submerged except the grim faces of the sleepers, which looked as dank shrubbery growing above the tide, the sun sank quickly down, and the moon, bright and silvery, rose high in the heavens. Softly came the merry peal of bells as down the silvery stream a magnificent gondola was propelled. In the stern sat the white-haired caliph clad in his span white silken robe and wearing on his head a small red silk turban. Arranged around the golden boat were his ten satellites dressed in crimson gowns, bending their golden oars in the silvery tide. A more beautiful sight could not have been seen. High over the waves on a promontory stood the Irishman and the Mason, and a little distance below them, on a sharp ledge that extended into the sea, were the two lovers. At intervals the caliph stood up, and out of a great book read and sang alternately long extracts, with his face turned in the direction of the East. When he ceased, the red men rested on their oars and cried at the top of their voices: "Allah! Allah! God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet."

Farther down the lake they plied their oars, until they came to the young couple. Instantly they

made for the rock on which they were standing. Angelina and Louis, like two ship-wrecked survivors, gladly jumped into the boat. The gondola was immediately headed for the harbor. The molten mass began to recede, and, wonderful to behold! it flowed up hill as precipitously as it before descended. Green, blue and red lights welcomed the bark at its landing, and the ground around was honey-combed with all the figures of varied-colored fire which the torrent had left behind. Up from the wharf a magnificent mosque raised its dome. There the cortege proceeded, followed by the Masons, who had risen from the overwhelming tide. They presented a weird spectacle. Their clothing covered with a substance like quick-silver, sparkled brightly as they passed underneath the varied-colored lights that skirted the roadway. Their faces, however, were far from presentable. Some wore deep cuts, others had blackened eyes, and all were a little worse from their share in the melee. They were indeed a motley crowd. The ten robed red men led the march. The great bell in the lofty tower pealed forth its sonorous toll. The doors of the massive structure were thrown open, and the strange assembly marched in. The elegance of the paintings and the exquisite lines of art were lost on all save the young lovers. Louis saw there, with the eye of a well trained artist, that the great master-hands of the world had lent their genius and skill to decorate the splendid temple. Twelve columns of polished granite supported the roof, which was

of concave style of architecture. Windows stained with figures dear to the Christian heart stood at different intervals. The frescoing of the walls and the roof was superb. There were no seats in the edifice. The cortege marched to the centre of the building, where it halted. The doctor and the Irishman, who had followed the Masonic troop, took their stand by the side of the lovers, who were in a position near to the white-robed prophet. The half-turned-down lights flashed brightly and showed an interior full of wonderment. The scene was indescribable. It must have closely resembled that which the enchanted Aladdin saw in the land of Nod. The pale face of Angelina recovered something of its usual color and beauty. Louis, too, was more cheerful. It was ficult to tell how the Irishman appeared under his ndages, but the doctor certainly bore that scowlg, ugly expression which we have seen so often printed on his countenance. In the circle of red n knelt the prince, with his head turned in the ection of the East. He prayed long and loud in me mysterious fashion, known only to his satellites, who responded with wild shouts. Suddenly there appeared before them an idol, the most hideous thing imaginable. Then broke forth a wild uproar: "God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet!" the red men incessantly proclaimed. This declaration was kept up all the while the chieftain and his tribe postrated themselves before the disgusting mass of disfigured red clay. The ceremony being finished, the proces-

sion filed out by a rear door. It made its way down a gloomy road to the sea. The caliph gazed far out into the darkness, but could observe nothing. He raised his wonder-working sceptre aloft, and peals of slow rolling thunder were heard from the sky above. The heavens were obscured. A flash of lightning revealed a black whale-shaped boat tossed up and down by the waves of the great incoming tide. It was empty and yet steered mystically, as if guided by a master's hand, to where the procession was in waiting. The thunder bellowed louder at every flash of lightning. The sea was swept wildly by the wind. Huge billows dashed against the boat that had been secured by the red men, but this did not prevent the prince from entering it. His followers did likewise. Angelina hesitated, and held to the hand of her lover con sively, but two Masons ushered her and her comp ion into the boat much against their wills. Then f lowed the wearers of the aprons, and lastly, Jerem arm in arm with the doctor. All were on board, a large legs of mutton sails were reefed and put bef the wind, and the strange party bade farewell to t shore. They had not sailed far out when gigantic waves accompanied by a downpour of rain threatened every instant to submerge all on board. High on top of mountainous waters, now low in their valley, the mysterious bark rose and fell. The lightning revealed the terror-stricken faces of all save the prince, who sat undisturbed at the helm. A vivid glare of light, the passengers lurched the boat to one

side, and the Irishman was thrown headlong into the relentless old ocean, the impenetrable blackness concealing the boat as he rose to the surface.

CHAPTER XI.

"YOU HAVE PLAYED ME FALSE."

FORTUNE, however, favored the Irishman, and he was landed safely on a ledge of rocks that jetted out into the sea. He walked along this in a careful manner, as the wind was still blowing a violent gale and the waves dashed more furiously in the tempest-lashed sea. At last, worn out by the fierce battle he had gone through, he finally reached a point whereon was built a light-house. The place was deserted, and having entered it, fatigued, he lay down and fell asleep. His thoughts, even in dreams, reverted to the all-absorbing Mystery of the Yellow Manse. He prayed to God to assist him. He alone could remove the difficulties that obstructed its solution. "Who is this Miss Angelina? Is she really the daughter of Omar? What power had caused all these strange phenomena? Is he a devil in human form?" This last thought aroused him from his troubled repose. The rain continued to fall on the angry waters. The soldier made an examination of the surroundings. He saw a great search-lamp, which he quickly lighted. Its gleam shone to a long distance. He saw what ap-

peared to be a ship in distress near the ledge, and he lowered the light till it reflected directly upon it. He recalled to mind that the lovers might sorely need his help. He heard the shouts of the red men as they realized that their cries of distress were answered. "Allah!" they roared, while the terrified Masons wept like children. The caliph sat stiffly and sternly in the rear of the boat, apparently unconscious of the surroundings. The faces of Angelina and Louis wore a mingled look of sadness and weariness. Gallantly the rowers strove to keep the half-sunken boat afloat above the water until they could reach the land. Alas! they were exhausted. The bark, which was partly filled with water, was fast sinking,—and it must have gone quickly to the bottom had not Jeremy, seeing a small boat on the stays, put away to the rescue. The soldier's craft had no sooner reached the submerged one than the doctor, who was fearful of being swallowed up in the yawning deep, made a jump for Jeremy's boat, and lucky for the sexton, it was short, and the red rascal landed, to his consternation, in the water. Jeremy could not help laughing at his predicament as he dragged his unfortunate enemy into his boat.

Angelina, Louis and the caliph were next taken aboard by the Irishman and rowed quickly to safety. Having landed them at the light house, he again set out for the sinking bark. Six of the red men climbed into Jeremy's skiff, and the sinking whale-back, being relieved of its burden, partly right-

ed itself, and while several of the stronger Masons took the oars, the Irishman threw them a rope and piloted them to shore. The caliph addressed those in the boats in some mysterious language, and raising his staff high above his head, executed some queer antics, during which the whole scene underwent a wonderful transformation. All present were controlled by his influence, except the stout-hearted sexton. Nature itself changed under his magic spell. Instead of the sea that broke so violently over the rocks, there now appeared a vast floor of crystal. The search-light had burned out, and everything was in darkness for some time until a chandelier with flaming torches of every describable color swung into view, suspended in the air. The ledge of rock was transformed into a grand gallery of antique design, and the light-house resembled a kingly throne, before which sat the lovers. On the floor below, the Masons gracefully paid homage to their Supreme Master who sat on the throne. While this ceremony was in progress, a deep silence pervaded the place. When everything was ready, the prince arose, and in a loud voice said:

"Come hither, Miss Angelina."

The lady slowly responded to the summons. The doctor ran from the gallery and offered her his arm, but she ignored him. The other red men who remained on the floor below stood with ears and mouths open, waiting to catch every word that fell from their master's lips. The caliph, glancing sharply into the eyes of the girl in black, addressed her:

"So, madam, after repeated refusals, I am informed that you have consented to be my bride."

The doctor moved somewhat nervously at this remark, while Louis stood up with a defiant air. The lady laughed heartily, and gave an affirmative answer with a low bow.

"Ha! ha! perseverance wins at last."

"She will never become your wife, Sir Caliph; I have first claim."

"Know you not, young man, that I am Prince Omar, the lawful heir to the throne of Mahomet? How dare you oppose the decrees of heaven!"

"Aye, prince, if you were the king of the universe, much less the aspirant to the tottering dynasty of Constantinople, the fair city which your despicable and idolatrous forefathers wrenched from my Christian ancestors, I would resist your claim."

"A Christian dog!"

"Better a Christian dog than an infidel whelp."

The prince shook with rage.

"Do you understand that she loves me?"

"Base falsifier, remove from her the devilish charm you have placed around her, leave her to herself, and if she is willing to have you for a partner, I will gladly relinquish my title to her."

"Proud, stubborn creature, are you not in my hands? This instant I could command that your head be taken off to ornament my gate-posts."

"Not exactly; for should a Bonaparte see it, then your black crimes would be punished as deserved."

"A Napoleon amongst us."

"A direct descendant in heart and admiration of the general that made you cry for mercy at Cairo."

The young painter's words fell on the ears of the deeply concerted caliph like a thunderbolt. It was only a haphazard remark of a name that worked more terror in the hearts of the enemies of France than a Krupp gun could have done.

"My young friend, I would not have asked you to give up the hand of Angelina but for the promise she made to her mother—the dear departed Lucile."

"Angelina, Angelina," the young lover cried, "is it true that you have plighted your throth to a pagan? Speak, are you engaged to be that devil's wife?"

Lady Angelina stood unmoved by the heart-rending plea, and when he paused at length, she unhesitatingly answered:

"I love him; Louis, you are a Christian."

"Do you believe me now?" hissed the caliph.

"No woman could love a usurper, a conspirator, a coward."

"Christian unbeliever, spy, by sword, by fire, and all that is cruel you shall die."

The trial had gone far enough to suit the Irishman, who had cautiously moved forward to the throne. He saw that Louis suffered more from the rejection of Angelina than the caliph's sentence.

"Steady! steady" he shouted, as if he were commanding a company of dragoons. The red men set up their deafening noise, and the prince, seeing some

uneasiness arising that he could not control, announced the council adjourned. This came so unexpectedly to the assemblage, that they hissed the decree of their leader. The latter, to retain his prestige and restore his favor among the lodge members, addressed them as they were filing out.

"Brothers all: you are cordially invited to attend my wedding, which has been set for the tenth moon."

The Irishman stood behind after the prince concluded. The influence which the prince exercised was marvellous. He manœuvred his wand once more, and darkness covered the place. This lasted only for a moment, and when it faded away they were seated in a large, square room whose walls were a pretty shade of light blue, studded with stars of gold. The painter had no doubt imitated the landscape of some grand night, and he certainly performed his task admirably. The clouds, white and dark blue, seemed to soar aloft through a lighter veil of crimson in the western sky, while the new moon tried to break through them. The furniture of the room was of polished mahogany, consisting of six handsome pieces. The doctor and the soldier occupied richly embroidered settees on either side. In the centre of the room was a richly carved table, on whose marble top rested a brazen lamp, with a red silken shade, that cast its pleasant shadows about the room and upon the red men who were smoking their pipes peacefully in the corner. A large *têtе-à-têtе* stood at the end of the room, upon which sat the white-robed chieftain, while

Louis stood facing him by the side of a large easy rocker. Angelina, who had been absent, returned to the side of the old red chief, having discarded her black dress for one of white silk of the richest material. Age and beauty were there contrasted. Both were clad in white, and in this alone did they resemble each other. The large blue eyes of Angelina peering into the little ferret eyes of the caliph, showed the beauty of the one and the ugliness of the other in bolder relief. The features of the one were decidedly pretty, while those of the other were extremely homely. The artist, who stood as mute as a statue, looked pale and wan, and it was a matter of conjecture how the doctor and the Irishman appeared. At any rate, there must have been something peculiar about the latter which the caliph did not relish, for he moved uneasily when he met the sexton's eyes. Maybe the occasional wink with which Jeremy met the gruff stare of the prince might have caused his wrath to boil. No one dared to utter a remark, but the grimaces of the caliph spoke volumes, which his followers were too sleepy to interpret properly. If the countenance of Angelina was particularly bright, that of Louis was sadly dejected, while from the inexpressible and changeful face of the prince you could not tell whether he was going to laugh or cry, and it was only after a careful study you eventually discovered that he was going to do neither, as this was his natural expression. At a distance he seemed to be a venerable personage of mild and placid mien,

but powder and paint had done all that for him, and when you drew nearer you could see at once his hidden ugliness. It did not take the Irishman many minutes to find out that unless he began some line of action he would be soon peremptorily dismissed from the caliph's presence. Finally revolving many things in his brain, he broke the death-like silence :

" Christian, why penetrate the mystery of this house? A spy, entrapped as nicely as a cuckoo in a cage."

" Spy ! " cried the doctor, awakening from his snooze. He glanced sharply around, and seeing the crest-fallen Louis, yelled with all his lung force: " Spy ! rival ! you shall not escape me this time."

The frantic auburn-haired physician flung his coat off as if he were making ready to dissect a carcass.

" Villain ! " bawled the caliph, staring fiercely at the artist ; " you have attempted to reveal the secret of our order."

In the meantime the soldier was carefully watching the actions of the jealous medicine man. The young painter's head bent low for an instant, and the death dealing doctor rushed upon him with a glistening blade in his grasp. He would have stabbed Louis had not Jeremy pulled his little revolver, and firing at the quack, sent him tumbling and howling on top of the red gowns. The wounded Mason, thinking that the end of his life was approaching, moaned bitterly :

" A minister, a priest—some one ; I am dying."

The dreaming red men jumped to their feet and ran hither and thither. Bedlam broke out within the place. The sharp eyes of Louis were steadfastly centred upon the prostrate form of the wounded man. The caliph forgot his cunning. He lifted his magic sceptre, but its wonder-working power had fled. He grew pale and shook with fright as Lady Angelina, with a cry of exultation, rushed into the arms of her lover.

"Back, madam, you are a deceiver, an arch-hypocrite. I have trusted you more than all other women, and you have proved false to me. Back, I say, else I'll—I'll kill you," stammered the artist.

Angelina awoke from her lethargy. Her cheeks were a livid hue, while her eyelids dropped down on her beautiful eyes as heavy as lead. She advanced, half-blinded by tears, toward where Louis was seated, and shaking off the deadly pallor, she addressed the Rabbi:

"Prince of evil, you have shown me off in black colors. Scoundrel! rascal! wretch! you have played me false."

Her lovely face grew furious. King Balthazzar could not have been more surprised when he saw the mysterious hand writing on the wall, than was the caliph when he found that the power he had exercised over the young lady had gone from him.

"O Father Mahomet," he appealed with loud supplication. "Gabriel, hear thy prophet. God is God, and is not Mahomet still his prophet?"

"Mahomet is a devil," was the response of a death-sounding voice.

The caliph shrugged his shoulders and scowled fiercely. The yells of the doctor were fearful to listen to. The red men asked aid for their wounded companion, who had now relapsed into unconsciousness. The prince whistled shrilly, and instantly a crowd of his henchmen darted from all sides into the room, raising their hatchets high above their heads. They saw the young lovers, and bound Louis hand and foot. As they bore him away the artist saw his darling fly into the outstretched arms of the prince. Jeremy wondered how all this was brought about. The doctor had partly recovered, and shrieked out: "A minister! Oh, a minister!"

The caliph, addressing the soldier, said:

"Go and bring the minister of our order to this man—the Reverend Mr. Long."

The prince took Angelina's arm, and four red men carried the doctor away. The lights were lowered, and the Irishman in the confusion sought the secret passage to freedom.

CHAPTER XII.

"ARE YOU, TOO, A TRAITOR?"

JEREMY walked rapidly through the long hallway which had been the scene of his hurried flight when the drunken Masons, like madmen, sought his scalp. He thought he

remembered the passage too well to mistake his way, but, alas! he had done so. He was lost in the great windings of the crooked old house. He ventured, after wandering about for some time, to enter one of the dark rooms, in the hope that it might lead him to the staircase. He pulled hard; at first the door appeared locked, but suddenly there was a clock-like action in the knob, and it sprang wide open. The place was pitch black. In one corner of the room he was horrified to find himself among mangled and maimed bodies. Were they all murdered? Instruments of the ghouls showed that some of them at least had been snatched from the grave. He could not bear to look at them, and ran hither and thither, not knowing were he was going. In another place he saw fierce looking mummies stored on shelves many feet high. On another side there were all kinds of stuffed animals—a menagerie too gruesome to witness, even in broad daylight, without a shudder. It was a lucky chance that he had been lost in the strange enclosure, for as he opened another great door, he saw his friend behind iron bars—a prisoner, with the red men carefully guarding him. The Irishman had another purpose than trying just then to liberate Louis, and he did not attempt a rescue. He had cautiously numbered his steps, marked out the angles in his mind, until he came to where the door clicked, and he was once more like a chess master following his skilful "king." He sought again the entrance to the corridor, and having at last come to it,

he recollected the combination, and once more steadying his bearings, he was soon flying up the elevator to the cupola, which he descended this time safely. It was dusk as the Irishman made his way by a circuitous route to the rectory. He there found the two priests in conversation with Sister Marguerite. They were talking of the Yellow Manse when the old soldier familiarly opened the door of the parlor without knocking. All three were surprised at the intruder. The pastor frowned at him threateningly :

" How dare you come here without an apology of some sort ! "

" I'm on business, and shure I thought that me face would admit me without any certificate, so I offered none."

" Business ought to be conducted in a straightforward manner."

" But the business is crooked, and what then, yer riverence ? Father Rogers, are ye blarneying me again ? Don't ye know Jeremy Owens, yer sexton ? "

There was a cry of exultation from all present. The rector shook the hand of the Irishman warmly.

" What news ? " asked the curate.

" Have you solved the mystery ? " queried the nun, enthusiastically.

" Plenty of news, yer riverence, but, Sister dear, I can't say that I've solved much. The fact is, the more I find out about the Manse, the more limited, I confess, me power of construction becomes. Louis and I have put two and two together, and we fail to agree on the fine points."

"Where is Mr. James?"

"In confinement, yer riverence, but with the help of Father Rogers we will afford him relief."

"How, Jeremy, can we assist him?"

"Simply by accompanying me when I am ready. There is a poor wretch crying for a minister near by, and you will, I think, be the best to console him."

Worriment left its lines on all present. Father Rogers had grown ten years older since the accident, and the curate and the nun were only shadows of their former selves. None of the priests offered to speak, and Sister Marguerite, whose soul was filled to the brim, could not restrain herself:

"Have you learned, Jeremy, that any of the crimes enumerated by my dying father were in any way connected with my family?"

The sexton was confused. "I hope not, and may God forbid; yet I wouldn't be at all surprised to learn at last that all of us are connected to a greater or less extent in the wonderful case. Ha! ha! shure I've been considerin' often, if I ain't really a relative to some one beyant, there's something wrong. Wouldn't it turn out fine if pretty Angelina was an Owens—about the fifth in order of generation; then I might forget me own Molly and raise her to the first degree of Owens's."

The redeeming feature of the Irishman's humor had a happy effect; the curate and the nun smiled, and the pastor chuckled at the pleasantry of his sexton.

"When have you seen Miss Liffey, Jeremy?" inquired the rector.

"Och! over a week ago, and I fear the worse when we meet. Molly is very touchy, so she is, and maybe, instead of a love affair, it will be a real fight with clubs up, and me lady holding the trump."

"I will explain for you, Jeremy."

"Musha, bad luck to the ill luck that obstructs me way. One smile of the dearest, sweetest face that ever beamed on a mortal, and a second life would invigorate me languishing heart. But, no; I will never let love and duty fight each other. Louis James must be rescued, and, Father, we must be about our task."

Sister Marguerite and Father Delon bade a fond good evening as the pastor and the servant began to chat confidentially. Jeremy told the rector all he had heard and seen, and sought his advice on difficulties that he did not care to solve. Having ended which, they proceeded to formulate their plans.

"Now, Father, you will come with me to-night, and let me tell you in the start so that you won't be scandalized, the Riverent Mr. Long will be your companion. We must nevertheless get a bit of advantage on him, so ye wont be shocked if I ask ye to cover up yer collar a little and pull down yer hat a bit, for it's a mighty damp night—and shure they say such weather is bad for the head and throat anyway—and go straight ahead without delay to the Yellow Manse, while I'll in the meantime inform Mr.

Long. Don't worry, yer riverence, the entrance will be aisy."

The soldier, as quick as he got assurance of the pastor that he would go as desired, went in search of the dominie. After many tedious inquiries he found the minister's residence. The divine had not gone out after dark since the night of his midnight bath in company with the Jew, and he rather reluctantly accompanied the sexton. After much persuasion, however, he consented to go, and with Jeremy considerable in advance, they marched to the Yellow Manse. Meanwhile Father Rogers had gained admittance to the mysterious old house, a privilege that he long desired. No idle curiosity prompted his wish. He had observed much, and he only desired to know what the sequel of it all might be. The pastor of St. Mary's was no sensationalist pulpiteer. He believed in working quietly and effectively to bring souls to virtue. He was indeed a true follower of his Master. No morbid craving for popular applause took possession of him in the present mystery; scandal alone prevented him from an open exposure of the doings of the Yellow Manse. Moreover, he understood that he had to acquire substantial evidence of the evils done therein, and he prudently hesitated before he would manifest them. The minister was of a different calibre altogether. He could not fill his present position unless he could handle up-to-date questions scientifically and rhetorically to suit his aristocratic audience. It was

for no other purpose than to suit the whimsies of a fastidious flock that the Reverend Mr. Long was called to his present charge. They had tired of bibles, and the most sublime parts of Scripture never touched their enlightened hearts, and consequently they shipped them to the South Sea Islands—and for what?—because they themselves had forgotten their God. They had now their choice in a man whose chief aim in life was money and adulation. The patient lay on a cot in a small white-washed room in the cellar. The priest knelt by his side, endeavoring to rouse him from the stupor that had come over him. The rector was not long at his work when Jeremy and the minister entered. The clergymen eyed each other, and the parson elbowed himself forward until he stood by the bedside of the patient. There was silence in the apartment until the injured man began to rave.

"Miss Angelina, I know the secret of your life."

The dominie edged uneasily a little nearer to the bedside and placed his hand on the wounded doctor's mouth.

"Arrah, me riverent sir, do ye wish to take the bit of breath that is in him out of him?"

The minister blushed furiously and replied:

"Well, friend, he is not responsible for what he says."

"That's all the more reason that you should let him say what he will; shure ravin' is like dreamin' —ye are not accountable for that."

"Ha! ha! young man, you are my rival"

The ugly physican gazed at the Irishman and laughed loudly. Jeremy was frightened, but recovered himself in an instant.

"Louis James, you have crossed my path, and you are doomed to die a violent death. Ha! my good old knife shall taste your heart's blood!"

The priest turned and moved away from the couch; the minister did likewise.

"Life," he continued, moaning bitterly, "what do I care for life when the lady of my love has departed from me! Death to the vagabond that caused my grief. Death to myself; but not yet. The devil and that accursed brotherhood have commanded me to fulfill another oath. O miserable alliance against everything sacred!"

The minister hastily walked to the head of the bed. The sufferer shook like one afflicted with a terrible fit of ague. The parson stroked the cheeks of the doctor to keep back the plot that was evidently forthcoming. The soldier, not to be outdone in his attention to the patient, approached a little closer also.

"Oh, I have tired of all around me. The house of Omar is attacked on all sides and is destined soon to fall into ruin and disgrace. It is haunted, mystified, electrified by the Turk. A spy, a rival stands nigh!"

The doctor smoted the dominie's hand in comtempt. The latter was in grief. He was bound by oath to still with death the babbling tongue of a brother-Mason. He bent over the cot; the soldier did likewise, and the minister shouted to Jeremy:

"Go, leave the place."

"Leave the place is it, and put me brother into yer hands?—not a foot."

"Rabbi Omar, you have ruined me. You taught me gambling, spiritism, and all the black arts, to exercise at your command. I was your hireling, your tool. No social standing, no home; a traitor to myself, to my family, and my country, and spies and rivals to contend with. Confound the spy! I would rather see this house and its secrets buried in hell than they be brought to light, and yet I would tell all the oaths of the lodge, even the great conspiracy against my country, to win the hand of Lady Angelina."

The doctor opened his eyes aghast.

"Have I been wandering in my thoughts? Have I agitated you, Mr. Long?"

The parson was too dumbfounded to speak. He sized up the physician in awe. The latter sat up in the bed, and stared wildly around the room.

"Who is that man?"

Jeremy turned in the direction indicated, and saw the rector passing out of the narrow doorway.

"Go, bring him back."

The soldier obeyed the command, and went in search of the rector, who had disappeared in the outer darkness. He soon came to a strange lake, over which was suspended a draw-bridge in the air. Strange cries grated on his ears, and amidst the scuffling he distinguished the young artist's voice gasping out: "Murder."

Instantly he thought of going to his aid. He saw that the bridge was of no use to reach Louis, and without the least hesitation he dove into the black waters and struck out with all speed for the opposite bank. As he came to a small rope ladder that would have admitted him to the landing, he saw two piercing black eyes watching down upon him.

"Spy!" hissed his antagonist as he jumped on the soldier, at the same time dealing him a terrible blow with a cudgel. Then commenced a struggle between the two contestants. Not a word was uttered—an occasional splash alone told that the battle was still on. The sexton, feeling that the odds were against him, resolved to fight as he had never before done, rather than now surrender, when he saw how much was at stake. Being an expert swimmer, he sank deeply below the tide, and catching his enemy by the legs, pulled him down and implanted him in the mud. He quickly rose to the surface and struck out gallantly for the shore. The enraged and partly choked adversary came to the surface and followed the sexton in quick pursuit. Before Jeremy reached the rope he became greatly exhausted, and would have succumbed but for the dreadful circumstances that urged him on. He saw once more in the flickering light the glassy eye balls of the Turk, he heard the gasp of his young friend in the murderer's embrace, and a moment later felt the sting of a dirk flash across his face. The Irishman with a groan of pain sank beneath the sombre tide. With a shriek of

exultation the red man awaited for his foe to rise till he would finish him. One supreme effort, and the wily Irishman fetched underneath the waters, and when he rose again he had in his trembling grasp his small revolver. No sooner did the frightened and maddened Turk see the dark object than he swam rapidly toward it. Then was renewed the desperate struggle. The sexton awaited his onset, and as they came face to face he fired point blank. The Turk gave a mighty shout and sank. Jeremy did not wait to ascertain the result of the injuries he had inflicted, but painfully pulled himself to the landing. Here he had another encounter to undergo, but he was too weak to resist.

A burly, long-jawed red man would have choked him had not the genial pastor interfered. In a thrice the soldier and the priest had the assailant bound in the cell in which they found their friend Louis. It took but a few minutes to release the artist, and, thanks to the skill of the painter and the rector, Jeremy was fit to fight another battle at a moment's notice.

"What means, Jeremy, shall we use to cover up my escape?"

"Why, me good friend, just take the gown off the Turk and put your clothes on him."

This was certainly a feasible plan, and the artist and sexton soon disrobed the very unwilling prisoner. Louis looked like a true devotee of Mahomet when his toilet was complete. He stained his face with the

red mud of the lake, mixed with a solution of tobacco juice, pencilled his eye-brows and hair, and filled his long pipe, and was ready under this disguise to attempt the most desperate deeds of daring.

"It wants scarcely an hour for council to assemble, Louis, and in the meantime go and get all the knowledge possible of the premises and people, while Father Rogers and meself will keep our eyes open. The friends parted on their tour of investigation—Louis to one side, and the pastor and the sexton to another. The latter confined their search to the lower part of the house, while the young man, emboldened by his disguise, ascended a long staircase until he came to a high sheet iron door. He quietly turned the knob, but it refused to open. He tried again, and as he was about to give up in despair, the lock clicked, the door swung open and admitted him into the grandest studio he had ever seen. Large life-sized paintings of the saints, standing beside the busts of gods and goddesses of antiquity, greeted his eye. How his young heart leaped with joy when he saw the picture of the Blessed Virgin. In it he saw the traces of his love, Miss Angelina. It was evidently a work of the Middle Ages ; but how could he account for the likeness of the Lady of the Manse? A statue stood off in another corner, which seemed to be an exact model of the painting. He gazed long and earnestly at these magnificent pieces of art, and then betook himself into a conservatory which contained the choicest plants in full bloom. Roses and lilies inter-

twining each other, gave forth a perfume—from under the palms and ferns that overshadowed them—that was really invigorating. Flowers of every species, representing all the flora of the Tropics, filled his heart with a deep, inspiring love of the mystic bounty of Nature. The next department that he entered was a hall of small dimensions, but elegantly fitted out. A stage set with superb scenery, showing a virgin country, stood in the background. A large unfinished picture of a mother and child, clasping the dead body of a parent in the last embrace, stood on an easel in one of the wings. The floor, devoid of carpets, was composed of highly polished boards as smooth as glass. Seats of red plush afforded home-like comfort to the guests that might attend the performance. To the right of the stage stood a handsome mirror, in which the artist saw, to his consternation, the white-headed caliph dogging his footsteps. He was paralyzed with fear, nevertheless he tried to walk as coolly around the place as if he were alone. From the hall he proceeded through a beautifully furnished parlor, but seeing that the prince still followed him, he did not linger, and retraced his steps a few paces and dashed out a door, not knowing whither he was going. He heard the loud, coarse laugh of the caliph as he ran, and pausing a moment to see if he were still pursued, he heard the creak of a settee, and the artist felt satisfied that the caliph had lain down to rest. He walked quickly down a long corridor until a glass door stood in his way. He glanced in, and

looking about in all directions, seeing no one, entered. The placed seemed deserted, and he was about to go out, when the angry cry of a woman startled him :

"Who dares to enter my prison without my permission?"

The young artist turned his head, and saw Angelina clad in a plain white gown, with her long hair dishevelled and hanging down her back.

"Speak," she cried, and her fine eyes danced in her head.

"Gracious lady, I am—I am," stammered the artist, but he was interrupted.

"You are a devil come again to persecute me by trying to enforce me to become the wife of Omar!"

"Madam, I am—"

"You are a traitor—a spy, whose presence I hate! Tell me your purpose, quick."

"Be patient, Miss Angelina."

"Patient, and destined to be a prisoner during my life. Villain, you speak with soothing tongue. Do not deceive me ; you are playing the hypocrite. Confound your impudence! You are unarmed ; I see your uneasiness."

"Angelina, you treat me unjustly ; I am armed, and I fought with this in your defense. Take it," and the the artist threw his revolver at her feet.

"Gallant hero, do you think that a woman has not courage enough to defend herself. Scoundrel!" she murmured, as she took up the weapon, "is it thus you taunt the weakness of my sex? I would not

contaminate my hand by the shedding of your wicked blood in my own interest, but in the defense of my family and my country, I am ever ready to shoot down a treacherous conspirator when and wherever I meet him. Unfold the plot which you have laid for the destruction of France and the overthrow of the House of Louis."

"I swear that I do not know of any. I am your friend."

"My friend, and in the employ of the black prince. "One!" shouted the enraged woman. "By the time I count three, Sir Satan, you shall be a corpse, unless you consent to answer my question: What is the plot?" The artist was in a dilemma; the whole frame of his beloved shook with determination. He did not want to reveal his identity, if possible, and he was doubtful whether or not her affection centred on him alone, and this he wished to finally determine.

"Two!" yelled the frantic woman, with greater vehemence than before. The artist, taking her unawares, closed in upon her; she fired; the glass of the door was shattered into a thousand pieces, and the satellites of the caliph rushed in with their ever-gleaming hatchets raised high above their heads, ready for the signal of extermination, when the prince, who was at their head, motioned them away. At that instant she recognized the face of her lover, and she shrieked wildly:

"Ah, Mr. James, are you, too, a traitor to the House of Louis?"

CHAPTER XIII.

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY.

WHEN Jeremy and Father Rogers had journeyed around the strange quarters below without discovering anything new, they resolved to go to the floor above. Accordingly they ascended a long pair of iron steps which admitted them to the culinary department. The soldier seized the pastor by the arm.

"Whist, yer riverence, if I'm not greatly mistaken, here's where me own Molly works."

The Irishman stepped noiselessly into the pantry. Sure enough there was Molly, and with a shout that nearly scared her to death, he gave her a hearty kiss. For an instant she was stung with indignation:

"Ill luck to yer disjointed face! If me own Jeremy were here, I would not suffer from yer foolish pranks."

The sexton moved another step forward, but Molly, seizing the poker, he retreated to a safe distance.

"Such impudence! I'll strike if ye attempt such a thing again."

"Dear Miss Liffey, I am well acquainted with Mr. Owens, and shure it's yer own Jeremy I am."

"Jeremy," she shrieked wildly, "if you still love me, go at once from here; you are in danger."

"Begorrah, it's a nice way to be treated by yerself, Molly O'Liffey—to be told to go out when I just

got in; faith, I'd like to know if all true lovers are treated like me; if they are, well, they have a mighty hard road to travel."

"Go quick, Jeremy. Oh, do go—he will catch you."

"Who, me dear?"

"The devil."

"The devil, you say; how am I to get out?"

"Take this key and return the way you came."

He needed no further advice. He fled down the iron steps, with the old priest at his heels, until a a great oaken door prevented them from advancing any further. Jeremy put the key in the lock and turned and twisted, but it would not yield to his exertions. They were pursued. Nearer and nearer came the footsteps, until they rattled over them on the floor above. They were descending the steps, when at last the door sprung open. No sooner had the pastor slammed it after him than he heard a volley of oaths from the foiled pursuers. The apartment in which they found themselves was certainly unique. It was filled with beads, crosses, turbans and a variety of fancy work and bric-a-brac of all sorts.

"Father, this is a queer house. Now while we are masters of the situation, let us investigate the mysterious window."

"Lead, Jeremy, and I will follow."

An iron stairway of two flights conducted them to a large, spacious room, where they were confronted

by the strange window. It was a plain, ordinary glass window—albeit its shape, which was transversal so that the two parts of it formed a star. They looked through it out into the street, and saw the curate gazing out of the window across the way. The pastor stood in the middle of the room, glancing at the rectory, and the Irishman was studying a stranger who sat operating what appeared to be a monster dynamo. Figures, like the hieroglyphics of Egypt, were traced upon the black-board that hung from the wall. Jeremy observed that the strange man resembled the doctor, though much older. For a moment he scanned the heavens through the window, and then turned over the maps and began to study them. While thus engaged, the room grew suddenly dark. A star shone through the window and reflected on the workman's homely features. The wheels of the mechanical device whirled around with indescribable activity, sending forth dazzling sparks that illuminated the whole building. The trees around the Yellow Manse creaked and groaned, and slowly the rain descended, while the lightning flashed and the heavens' artillery bellowed forth its tremendous peals. Suddenly the Irishman and the rector were startled in their hiding-place in the corner by a bolt that shot through the window and zigzagged around the room till it struck the dynamo. The bare room was instantly transformed into one of splendor. The figures on the boards reflected a charming view of the heavens, with its thousand stars and

wonders. The effusion of light refracted from the machine upon the face of the operator till it shone as the sun.

"The sky is connected with the earth—perpetual motion is solved," whispered the Irishman. The priest did not reply, so appalled was he by the wonders that were performed by the strange device. A cry rang out, the machine stopped, and the magic worker rushed pell-mell from the room. The sexton and his reverend friend listened, and in a moment the sharp whizz of a bullet told them that something was wrong on the floor below.

"Father, you go and find some secure place, and there await my summons." Saying this, the Irishman raised a hatchway and descended into the midst of the excited lovers. His presence prevented the artist from being summarily dealt with by the bloodthirsty red men. All present were astounded as they saw the soldier slide down a brazen pillar from the upper story. They thought him crazy, and he gladly upheld them in their opinion. Wildly gesticulating, he got into a controversy with the red men, till the caliph by his power caused silence to come over the latter, but the sexton went on rattling away in his usual volubility. The prince, facing the young artist, addressed him:

"So you, thus disguised, have dared, against all opposition and in the face of death, to come and offer your hand to this young lady. Miss Angelina, dismiss him once for all."

Angelina stood like one dazed, and at the prince's command said: "Go, Louis James, to the death you deserve, and my farewell is a curse on you and all who may bear your name."

The young artist was stunned. Was he mistaken, or had his suspicions proved true? Was the woman a deceiver?—yes, she had rejected him thrice. "Oh, false woman, your treatment of me is despicable. I hate you; you have betrayed all that is dearest to me. Remember, madam, my time of retribution will come, and I will laugh at your prayers and mock your tears."

"Oh, trifler, your day for vengeance will never rise. You have dared to reveal the secrets of this house, and your penalty, which has already been decreed, shall be sufficient to punish a betrayer of our holy brotherhood."

"I am really a spy in the interest of justice. You have carried the dark workings of the devil into the realms of civilization, and the time is drawing nigh when you, proud Sultan, shall suffer for poisoning innocent people by your black arts. The emblems of your order, an axe to pull down everything sacred, and a trowel to build up with the blood of Christians, a degenerate and immoral kingdom!"

"Do you forget that I am a prophet of the great Mahomet? Prince Omar, and rightful heir to the throne of Constantinople?"

"A prophet of Mahomet and Satan is one and the same."

The red men raised their hatchets in a threatening attitude.

"Oh, full well I know you are a prophet and that these are your imps."

"Allah! Allah!" the red men cried with rage, as with flaming eyes they only awaited the consent of their leader to hack the artist to pieces.

"So you know the Prophet Mahomet?"

"Aye, sir, scarcely less than yourself, while I presume to understand the Koran better."

"The Book! the Book!" shouted all in accord.

"Young man, you say that you understand the book better than I, who am a prophet, esteemed as an expounder of the maxims of that holy volume."

"You are acquainted with one side of it, while I am perfectly informed as to the Pagan, Jewish, and Catholic part of it."

"You err—it is wholly the composition of a Pagan."

"That is false: it was written by a Jew converted to Christianity, who afterwards turned reprobate."

"I am a Rabbi, and why offer an insult?"

"A Rabbi—whence came the title?"

"It was conferred on me by the synagogue when I saved the Jewish quarters from destruction in Paris."

"A Parisian, me dacent acquaintance," said the Irishman, moving forward and stretching forth his hand as if in expectancy of a hearty shake. The caliph, however, ignored him. The doctor grasped the soldier by the arm, but with that touch of which every son of Erin has some knowledge, Jeremy sent

the meddlesome physician to the floor. The doctor, sore from his many previous conflicts, retired mutely. The caliph raised his sceptre. Six of the red men, understanding the signal, grasped the soldier and carried him struggling away. A terrible silence pervaded the place until Angelina laid her hand gently upon the white-haired chieftain's shoulder. Louis, appalled by the power the prince worked on all present, broke forth in a loud denunciation of the Rabbi :

"Mesmerist and spirit-worker, bear in mind, if you can cast a spell around this young lady, you can exercise no charm over me. When she shall come to herself we shall know the truth. If then, foul hypnotizer, she professes her love for me, beware, caliph, rabbi, devil—beware!"

All the while this stage of affairs was in progress, Angelina, as clearly cut and as white as marble, stood almost motionless. Occasionally she gave a half-piteous glance at Louis, but it was only for an instant. Like a statue, she watched all that went on as passively as if she had no concern in what was being enacted. The caliph, when not engaged in conversation, appeared very morose. His face was like that of some monarch of antiquity newly risen to life. In the meantime Father Rogers had renewed the acquaintance of the charming twins—the Misses Lucile and Teresa. They recognized his kindly face, and were overjoyed to meet him again. The pastor heard the whole affair that passed between the cal-

iph and Louis, and he concluded wisely to keep silence and await developments. He learned from the children that they were closely guarded. They asked him for the Sisters, and their good friend, Jeremy. Pretty little innocents, enclosed day and night in the Yellow Manse, and weighed down by some sad tale that he could not fathom. While he was sorrowfully musing on the fate of the little ones, he was startled by the cries of the red men: "Allah! Allah! murder. Brother drowning in the pool!"

The red men came in, bearing the limp body of their fellow, while the jailer, whom Louis and the sexton imprisoned, still wore the chains and the clothes of the artist. Father Rogers, instructing the children to keep silence, hurried downstairs to an adjoining room, where he found the Irishman gagged and bound, whom he quickly freed. The priest could observe everything that happened in the room opposite, without being seen. The Rabbi shook as if with the palsy, and stammered out:

"Soldiers of my staff, take the body away and release your companion; no one is a witness."

"No one a witness, hey! Begorrah, I'm thinkin' I'm a good one," shouted the sexton, as he darted in the open doorway.

"Brothers all: the house is full of spies; what shall we do?"

"Kill them!" was the response to the caliph's question.

"You had better just act a bit sensible, old man,

and don't mind these blackguards," remarked the Irishman, as he played carelessly with his revolver.

"Kill him!" cried the doctor; "he has murdered one of our brethren, and in justice he should die."

"What is your name?" inquired the Reverend Mr. Long.

"I am a brother to me brother Mick, who died years ago in Ireland from the wounds inflicted by the Orangemen, whose associates ye are, yer riverence. Did ye get yer answer? Sir dominie, I'm surprised that ye associate with these black rascals."

"Spy!"

"You have spoken correctly, doctor; I had me eye on ye long since, and saw yer well-planned design to marry Miss Angelina, and I'll die before I'll procure another meetin' for you."

"Rival!" snarled the Rabbi at the physician.

Distant music resounded throughout the chamber, and all were astounded as a body of Masons—one hundred strong—marched in to the tune of the "Marseilles."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RETURN.

AFFAIRS had taken a more sombre aspect around the convent and the rectory since the pastor disappeared. It is true Father Rogers had often departed on a sojourn in quest of health,

but he had always informed his faithful parishioners where he was to go. This time, however, he had neglected to do so, and consequently his disappearance was a cause of worriment, particularly because a "fair" for the benefit of the church was in progress, in which he always took great interest. When the people of St. Mary's consulted the curate and Sister Marguerite on the prolonged absence of the pastor, they got but little satisfactory information, as neither knew where he went or when he would return. The parishioners did not know how to take the situation. Father Delon was not himself, and all noticing it, thought that he was overworked. The school children talked of the sadness of Sister Marguerite. Her face was long, and careworn lines that could not escape observation told that she suffered from some grievous ailment. The busy world still kept up its rapid gait. Old men hobbled off to their daily toil, praying that relief might soon come to them. Old women, too, went through their daily occupations under sore affliction. Ungrateful children had compelled them to earn a wretched livelihood or go to the poor house. No philanthropist regrets to see able-bodied men put their shoulder to the wheel of destiny and earn their bread as God has decreed; but who that has one spark of sympathy, could not shed a tear when he sees poor, delicate and uncared-for children moving to their toilsome labors, which are surely weighing them down to an early grave. Man forgets his fellow and leaves him to go along the

narrow path of life without a helping hand. All nature seemed neglectful of the poor. The sun rose, and fell as beautiful as if nothing but happiness fell to man's lot. The old river ran on; sometimes clear, then again, murky and black. Babies played and cried as usual in the old tenements. God alone hears the cry of afflicted humanity. Heaven alone, in its great book, notes all. It had been the custom to celebrate the pastor's home-coming in a fitting manner. The houses in the parish on such occasions were decorated with flags and bunting; the streets illuminated, and all the societies in regalia, paraded through the city until they arrived at the place where the meeting had been arranged. With a band at their head, they escorted their beloved rector through the streets, which were by this time aglow with bonfires and varied-colored lights. The bells of St. Mary's would ring out and tell to the great mass of people that assembled around the rectory that Father Rogers was home again. The pastor disapproved of such a time being made, nevertheless it was done as a fitting mark of respect. He played them a trick in the present instance, in getting away unobserved, but they were resolved to receive him when he might return. The trustees sought to ascertain, again and again, from the curate, where his reverence had gone, and that gentleman could only give the one answer, that he did not know. Meanwhile money was liberally subscribed. In vain did the curate protest. Few inquiries were made for the artist or the sexton.

It was said by some of the knowing ones, that the former went to Europe to take a course in artistic drawing, while the latter was a valet to the pastor. Thus the time made its course, and the young assistant grew more anxious each hour. Two long weeks had elapsed, and what had become of the rector?

"O great God!" sighed the curate, "suppose he has been murdered; then the blame shall fall to me for not informing of the whereabouts of his suspected detention."

One thing alone prevented him from acting in unison with the police, and that was scandal. While in this mood, the superioress came to the priest for information. Alas! she found him in a more uncertain state of mind than herself. Thus far he had borne up under the afflictions that came upon him, and he resolved to bear them patiently. He had, time and again, consoled the broken-hearted nun, now it was her turn to comfort him. The gracious Sister could not control the tears that poured down her long, thin face as she gazed at the thin, crest-fallen priest. At last, with a great effort, and seemingly self-possessed, she began:

"Father Delon, I know that you feel worried over the prolonged absence of Father Rogers, but all the Sisters are praying for his safe return, and I am confident that their prayers will be heard."

Father Delon, strong-willed though he was, could not recover his self-command as he half-tearfully spoke:

"Sister, I am troubled well-nigh to death over him. If I only knew his whereabouts. I fear—"

He could proceed no further.

"Father, do not fear; he will return safe and sound from the Yellow Manse."

"The Yellow Manse!"

"In all probability, that was his destination when he went away in Jeremy's company."

"I thought as much. Oh, that awful house perhaps overshadows the mystery of my family."

"Your family?"

"A story more strange than yours hangs over me; some day you will hear it; we can well act the part of sympathizers to each other; you have the consolation of knowing to whom you belong,—I do not."

"Our case is similar, Father; let us hope and pray that God in His unspeakable mercy may set all things right."

The nun thought it best to leave the young priest to himself, as she thought that perhaps her presence might agitate him all the more. She was as self-forgetting of her own good as mortal could be. Peace of soul would soon again be hers, when the merry laugh of the younger Sisters in the convent would call forth from her a corresponding happy response, when she might be as jovial to all at St. Mary's as in days gone by,—this granted, and she wanted no more.

CHAPTER XV.

PLOT ON PLOT.

WE left the Manse in a state of perturbation. So much was the even temperament lost in the Irishman that he danced every kind of a step from a cotillion to a hornpipe. He alternately laughed and groaned like a madman. His wild capers attracted all the attention of the Masons, and they at once put him down for a genuine fool. When he had concluded his part of the programme, he was lost to the surroundings. A throne extending the length of the hall—which was nigh fifty feet—stood directly before him. It was made of polished oak, and Gothic in structure. On it sat the caliph. Instead of the plain gown of white wool, he wore one of silk. Around his waist was a red silken sash caught by a golden buckle. His face, too, had undergone an extra dressing of powder and paint, while his white locks were too pretty to be real. A long beard helped to give him a mark of venerableness. There he sat, as if he were king of Life and Death. Miss Angelina had disappeared. The soldier feeling that he occupied too important a place, withdrew to the rear of the hall. The members of the lodge approached the throne and sat down on splendid easy-back chairs that were reserved for them near the caliph. The Masons discussed various subjects in a

subdued tone as they noticed that their master was depressed in spirits. The Irishman, unable to govern his tongue, went on unconsciously soliloquizing :

"Oh, faith, I am like one of the seven sleepers, so heavy is me head. Begorrah, it's a great house where they neither ate nor sleep. We'll be like Rip himself, that slept twenty years without knowin' it, sarrah bit of the neighbors will know us at all. Shure this is the night of the weddin'—the tenth moon, I believe they call it. Wirra, wirra, it will never go on while Jeremy Owens lives. I'm puzzled how to prevent it. God is good, however, and He will prove Himself stronger than the old boy this night."

His lips moved for an instant in prayer, and again he distractedly resumed :

"I'm thinkin' that it won't be so hard to rescue Miss Angelina from that devil, after all. He is as fine an imp as ever straddled a throne."

Suddenly a massive door opened, and the red men attired in robes of scarlet silk filed in, in Indian fashion. Behind them, supported on two lovely looking girls attired in pearl colored gowns, came Angelina, dressed in a superb white satin gown. Over her face hung a long, silken veil, caught behind her long, flowing tresses by a brooch of diamonds. Her train was carried by the twins Teresa and Lucile, enrobed in neat dresses of pink. As soon as the bride made her appearance the band struck up a wedding march. The caliph descended from his throne as the procession drew near, and took the arm of Angelina.

As the cortege halted, the Reverend Stephen Long stepped forward from the audience. It was now time to act. Where was the artist?

"Do you, Rabbi Omar, Supreme Master of our noble order and heir to the throne of Constantinople, take Miss Angelina Freemont—"

"Freemont is not that child's name, Mr. Parson; bless ye, but yer got things mixed."

The Masons turned around and viewed the soldier with contempt. The minister unheeded the interruption.

"Do you, Seignor Omar, take this lady for your wife?"

The Rabbi sharply replied, "Yes."

Stephen, turning to the young woman, "Do you consent to accept his hand?"

Angelina raised her veil. Her face was of an ashen color, and her response was a fierce "No," and she fainted dead away. The prince was seized with consternation. All his kindness and threats ended in the same blank refusal. He had power over her in all other respects save that he could not get that fatal "Yes" that would bind him to her. He was baffled forever in his hopes to win her.

"Treachery!" he shouted. "There is treachery in this lodge."

Some of the red men moved toward the Irishman, crying, "Traitor." That gentleman stood firmly braced against the wall.

"Back, me noble brothers, back," he repeated,

brandishing his ever-ready revolver. One of the Masons grasped a shot-gun that was nigh and fired point blank at the Irishman. There was a loud report, and when the smoke cleared away Jeremy stood as unconcerned as if nothing had happened.

"Ha!" he broke out, "it takes a good many chances like that to kill."

The gun was pointed at him again, and the Irishman pulled the trigger of his revolver, and the gun went to pieces in the Mason's hand. The brother gave a cry of pain, but he was only slightly injured by the stock. All was now in an uproar. Just then Father Rogers rushed into the room, followed by the artist. The former seized hold of the twins, while the latter took charge of Miss Angelina. All was done in a moment, and before the caliph and his friends realized what had happened, pursuit was vain. The artist and the pastor knew the secret way to liberty, and when they opened one exit they took pains that it was securely fastened before they advanced further. As soon as the Masons came to their senses they followed the fleeing party. Jeremy took this opportunity to escape from the room, and descending a small iron ladder, entered a dark room below, to await developments.

"Hail Columbia! we are prisoners in our own palace. Oh, I fear that our actions will be made public," cried the preacher.

"Allah! Allah!" snarled the red men. The caliph could not be comforted. He danced round the room, yelling in his frenzy:

"Doctor, you are doomed to pay the penalty of the escape. Imprisonment among madmen shall be your lot in this mortal life, and hell will add greater torments to you in eternity."

A tremor shook the frame of the red-eyed physician, and he howled piteously :

"Spare me such punishment, Lord Caliph."

"You have sold body and soul to me in this life, and I'll leave you to my friend Satan, to take care of you hereafter. Take him away, my braves."

At this command the terrified quack was carried off by the red men. Order having been once more restored, the prince sat listlessly on his throne, while his subjects discussed plans for the following day, which was the Twelfth of July. Simon Lowe addressed the meeting, when the plans were somewhat matured.

"Supreme Head, it is now fast approaching morning ; the sound of the clock has struck the hour of two. There is no time to be lost. All of us, brethren, have a grievance to lay at the feet of the papists ; the wrong done to us by those crazy-headed Romanists we will revenge by robbery, concealing it by firing the church across the way."

He was interrupted by maddening shouts : "Kill the papists!" The caliph sat unmoved during the proceeding, which, having at length ended, he asked :

"Brother Lowe, what impels you to urge bloodshed which will necessarily result from such destruction of property? Do you not know that public sentiment

shall discountenance any such attempt and condemn the good work of our order. Bear in mind that we must first consult how to protect our own interest from the danger that is approaching."

"If, Supreme Master, there are dangers threatening, let us go forth to meet them. I think that the only way of fighting our foe is by extermination."

"Will such a course rid us of the spies that enter our most secret chambers. Are not the Romanists universal?"

"You did not hear me through, your highness. In the general confusion which the burning of the church will cause, we will murder their priests, and once bereft of their leaders, our enemies will slowly die out."

"The priests? Are there more than one?"

"Besides the one here in disguise."

"A priest within this conclave? Oh, heavens! the one who is in fault shall perish miserably. Who is the priest, Seignor Lowe?"

"A certain Rogers."

"Fie on my guardsmen that would allow a stupid Romanist to outwit them. And who is the curate?"

"Père Delon."

"A Frenchman, I suppose."

The caliph was agitated by that name. He tried to suppress the tumultuous passion that swayed his whole body.

"Delon shall die this night, and another Napoleon shall feel my revenge. Brethren all, Simon has

advised well; I agree with him in all he has planned."

The caliph sat down to listen to the further arrangements of the foul crime. The minister arose, and with a swagger of his own superiority, asked: "Sovereign, may I beg you to state the reason why this plot should be favored of you?"

"A reasonable question, Reverend Sir," replied the caliph, "and one that will interest all here. Gentlemen, you are doubtless aware of the fact that Freemasonry took its origin in the far-off East; all my ancestors from time immemorial being staunch defenders of it. It was, however, but little known until after the battle of the Pyramids. You have heard of the terrible Bonaparte. It was he that ruined my army of twenty thousand of the Sultan's choicest troops, and wrung from me the opportunity to ascend the throne of Constantinople, to which I claim a right. Disgraced and banished after my defeat, I resolved to avenge myself upon him and his general. No chance was afforded me until the allies of United Europe marched into Paris, when I met the general who was foremost in the massacre of my soldiers. A sudden impulse seized me, and under the cover of night I made an attack on his home and set it on fire. The general escaped with his wife and child from the burning building. I saw him, and would have finished him but for the entreaties of his wife. The lady's face I shall never forget. Her eyes of hazel pierced my soul; and call me mad if you will, but from that moment I loved that Christian. To win her was my

aim; but I had my oath of revenge to settle first. Here was my opportunity. I learned that she was of the House of Louis the Sixteenth, and next in line to the throne of France. Ah, I had lost a kingdom; here was a chance to win one by marrying the Christian. 'Death to Napoleon!' was my cry. Having once disposed of them, Louis and Queen Antoinette being dead, I had only to gain her hand and I would be King of France, and the flag of Mahomet would fly over that proud kingdom, and Constantinople would be revenged. This has been our aim, Brother Long."

"Did she become your bride?"

"No; I told her the secret of my life, and entreated her to become my wife; but, alas! she died before I could call her my own. At her death she entrusted all that I told her to the ears of a Catholic priest—a Moslem's worst enemy—a Mason's most dreaded foe."

A howl went up from all present, who, from time to time, replenished their slackened throats from large black bottles.

"The priest still lives," shouted the caliph, "and the grand secret I have kept from you until to-night is in danger of becoming common property, by the escape of the prisoners, to the downfall of Freemasonry. The daughter of my lady love still lives, and she, too, has heard and seen much that should not be known. She can still bring to me what I have lost. By marrying her I shall again make one more bid for the throne of her country. If I succeed, then

Christianity shall lapse into decay ; France shall become Mahometan, and my Masonic friends shall reap the fruit of their assistance, while the name of Omar will be memorable for all time. While darkness lingers over the city, our last hope rests in the destruction of the priests across the street."

The lodge members remained perfectly quiet while their grand master spoke, and when he concluded the chamber resounded with shouts and exclamations of approval. The prince raised aloft his sceptre, and twisting it violently into all shapes, a wonderful scene passed before the eyes of the hilariously drunken Masons. The bodies of headless Turks dangled from swords suspended in the air. Bloody visages appeared on the wall, and all sorts of weapons besprinkled with gore lay upon the floor. Simon Lowe took a piece of money from an uncanny hand and kissed it exultingly. The minister, struck with terror, discoursed on the result of bad gatherings, while the drunken Masons yelled frantically and the red men shouted : " Allah ! Allah ! God is God, and Mahomet is his prophet." The mysterious view vanished, and instantly, " Spy ! Spy ! " resounded from all sides. The Irishman had been detected as he tried to escape. With consummate boldness he dashed through their midst, tumbling over Masons right and left, while the red men followed in pursuit, vowing vengeance on poor Jeremy's head.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

WHEN we left the pastor and Louis with their precious burdens pursuing their daring flight, the way out was not easily made. Every door they passed through seemed to have a peculiar combination and only opened at the last effort. An iron door which they sought to unlock, only yielded after a long and determined struggle, and lucky for the party, they did not advance far within the dark enclosure, or else another mystery might have been added to the Yellow Manse. There was a small cell with a door built of steel upon an elevator which was partly open, inviting admittance, but the darkness forbade the group to enter. An instant later, after they had come into the black space, the door of the cell sprung like a trap, and the cage shot downward at a frightful rate of speed. After wandering about for a long time the young artist led the way down a crooked stairs to the open air. Hastily the party went across the street to the rectory. Scarcely had they been seated than the Irishman ran swiftly across the roadway to the church window, through which he climbed, with the drunken mob of the Manse close at his heels. Jeremy fairly flew to the belfry, where he struck up the old familiar tune of "Home Again" on St. Mary's chimes. When the sound of the bells

rang out upon the clear morning air, the windows of the tenements suddenly opened, and heads were peering out from each one of them. Some of the less sleepy occupants ventured into the street and saw at a glance that something was wrong. Some of the Masons, who were too drunk to get into the church, fell wrangling among themselves, and others broke the grand stained-glass windows. The few people who had gathered gave the alarm, and in five minutes thousands were upon the scene. The Masons who had got into the church dismantled everything they could lay their hands on. They lighted straw and poured oil on the flames. But they were not long allowed to carry out their wicked end. One wretch succeeded in mutilating a magnificent statue of the Blessed Virgin, but his rueful act cost him the loss of his arm, which fell lifeless at his side. In the meantime the parishioners had taken a hand in the affair and handled the Masons roughly. The latter in turn proved a dangerous foe, as they shot into the crowd, wounding several. This served only to enfuriate the people. They drove the Rabbi and his followers into the Manse amidst a terrible fusillade of stones. They next subdued many of the white aprons, but not before much damage had been done to the rectory, which now appeared the chief place of assault. The priests came pluckily out of the house and begged the people to desist from the encounter, and it was indeed lucky for the still contending Masons that the very ones they sought to murder proved their best friends,

else they would not have been so leniently dealt with. When the attack was well-nigh over the police put in their appearance, and the first arrested were Simon Lowe, the money lender, and his friend Stephen Long, the minister. An hour after the fray all was silent. Here and there a head could be seen in the tenement windows, ready to give the alarm if the assault were again repeated.

Morning dawned, however, without a second engagement. Everyone, from the smallest child capable of understanding what a "Know Nothing" attack might be, to the oldest man of the city, arose early to inquire all about the trouble. Rumor soon had it that the outbreak was more serious than published. No black legs—happily for themselves—showed themselves on the streets, and the houses of suspects were carefully watched. The Twelfth of July was certainly an eventful one in that old and populous city. For it was on that day that "Know Nothingism" gave its last kick, and well did the people celebrate its downfall. Fireworks were sent off in abundance around St. Mary's, and the entire city was illuminated by bonfires. All the societies of the church were preparing to celebrate a twofold event—the return of their pastor and the downfall of Freemasonry and Orangeism. In the interim the rector was holding a secret conclave with Louis and Jeremy.

"Father, I've kotched the snake, not killed it, as the great Shakespeare says somewhere. He lives in

ambush, friendless, save for his few niggardly attendants."

"Jeremy, what have you learned since I saw you last?"

"A whole bookful, yer riverence, all except the cover. Louis, too, has acquired a good bit of the case, and puttin' one and one together, we're thinkin' every one for miles around is connected with the Mystery of the Yellow Manse. There is but one way of settlin' this business, and that is by permittin' Angelina and meself to visit that old rascal."

"Would you give her up to that devil again?"

"Oh, you mistake, Louis. Faith I wouldn't be a traitor; but business is business, and I'm working for yer account—not me own. If I don't have me way, I'll leave the mystery to the devil that brought it up." The artist saw that he had made a mistake in addressing the Irishman so sharply.

"Oh, Jeremy, a thousand pardons. I am—in love."

"I'll forgive you ten times more than you ask, me friend, for I know by yer own confession that what I told ye long ago is true, is it not?"

The face of the artist blushed knowingly to Jeremy's question.

"Well, then, I hope to attend the wedding, but there must be no delay to business."

"Take her, Jeremy; gladly I entrust her to your safe-keeping."

"Be temperate, above all things."

"There ye are again, Father Rogers. Shure I didn't take a drop of the old stuff since, side by side with Louis, I promised Sister Marguerite to unravel the mystery or never drink again. Where is the good nun, yer riverence?"

"She is ill in the convent, since the excitement of the early morning."

The sexton left the room, and the venerable priest and the painter stood watching the preparations that were being made to receive the pastor. Chinese lanterns hung on wires across the street. The buildings were decorated with flags and bunting, and the air was ablaze with bonfires. While they gazed out of the parlor windows, the Irishman came in, dressed in a suit of navy blue. He never looked better. Angelina came from an opposite room, and when she saw her friend, she extended her hand and shook it warmly, thanking him for all his kindness to her.

"Miss Angelina, we must play another part before we have done."

"What is it, Jeremy?"

"Can you confide in me?"

"Yes, till death."

The sexton, after a hurried whisper, accompanied her across the way. At the time they made their appearance before the entrance to the Yellow Manse, groups of persons were gathering to attend the parade and banquet. It was the first time that a number saw anyone entering the strange mansion before, and they stood in amazement at Angelina

and Jeremy ascending the steps. The beautiful attire of the lady attracted the attention of all, while the natty dress of the Irishman came in for many compliments from the admiring crowd. The sexton rang the bell, and Angelina covered her face with her veil.

"Please, sir, your business?"

She did not know Jeremy, who had suddenly grown dark whiskers and moustache.

"Is Mr. Rabbi Omar at home," inquired Miss Angelina.

"Yes, madam, but he will not be seen this evening, as he is unwell."

Jeremy interposed: "We are members of the family."

Molly would have ordered them to leave had she not recognized the twinkle in her lover's eye.

"Oh, then, it's me own Jeremy. Shure when yer out of trouble, why in the name of God don't you stay out of it. Your old mother, God rest her, told me that you would never be quiet until you would be settled down, and I don't know when that will be."

"Perhaps to-night, me darlint, and perhaps never," the sexton laughed aloud.

"Hush! the red men will hear you, and have your life. The master is wounded badly, and they say he can't recover."

"Whist, Molly, but—"

"But who is the lady ye have with ye, Jeremy?"

Miss Angelina and Molly were soon in each other's

embrace. Without further hesitation the Irish maid ushered both into the parlor.

"Molly," began the lady, "is there no way of interviewing the Rabbi without seeing the red men?"

"No possible chance for you, me lady, but there may be for Jeremy. The Rabbi is awaiting a doctor, and from what I learn, the man to come is unknown to any one here, and shure Jeremy can take his place."

"A capital idea, Molly dear. Go at once and inform the patient that the doctor has arrived."

She did not need a second command, but hastened to the bedside of the wounded Rabbi, who was groaning and raving in a frantic manner. She returned quickly, and motioning Angelina to go to the kitchen, she escorted her good-natured lover to the prince. Jeremy gave a sharp glance at the red men who surrounded the chieftain's couch wailing incessantly: "Allah, Allah!" The newly made M. D. pushed forward. He saw at once that his patient could not live many hours, nevertheless he went about his work with the skill of a practiced surgeon ready to meet the inevitable. He felt his pulse and ordered his hands to be bathed in warm water, and lastly, applied a stimulant that seemed to work its effect. The Rabbi showed signs of rallying. He felt the beating of his bosom. It appeared to stop for an instant. "Great God! he is dead," sighed the doctor, "and his secrets have died with him." It was only a long, heart-broken sigh, and the eyes of the caliph opened

wildly and glowered searchingly around. He was suffering intensely. Lo! the cause of the illness was apparent. A terrible gaping wound in his breast revealed the action of the heart. "After all, life is put in motion," thought Jeremy. One slight press of the thumb would have finished the agony of the wretched man, but that cord God alone had a right to sever. Jeremy gazed steadfastly at the eyes of the fast-sinking Rabbi, that stared coldly at him, and was almost horrified to hear him lisp between his teeth:

"Ah, I know your face, young lad, you cannot deceive me now. How can you be so kind to me? You are Jeremy Owens, the sexton of the church across the way."

These words whispered into the ear of Jeremy by so strange a personage, frightened him thoroughly.

The rough, red, unpainted face saw the consternation of the Irishman, and between groans and sighs the prince wildly continued:

"You have been a brave fellow to endanger your life so many times by entering these precincts. What has been your purpose?"

"My dear friend, I had a mystery to solve."

"And you solved it?"

"No, not completely."

"What have you to ascertain yet?"

"A few words from you will explain all."

"Ha! ha! boy, do you not know that with one stroke of my dagger I could cut in twain the slender thread

that binds soul and body together, and then all the secrets of my life would be buried in death. What use would you make of my confession?"

"Perhaps, my lordship, it would take away the stain of infamy that has been laid upon your life!"

"Pshaw! young man, there is no hope for one whom the devil has once got into his clutches. I served him too well, and I realize now too late that Mahomet is a devil instead of a prophet of God, and hell is my abode after this miserable life is ended."

The Rabbi sighed heavily and was about to relax again into a stupor, when a second draught of liquor revived him.

"Why say Mahomet is a devil?" inquired the Irishman, softly.

"He is a false prophet, and you are aware of that long since. You, I presume, are a Christian, and I am,—I am—" the caliph could not go on, his voice grew so husky.

"You are, too."

The Rabbi smiled: "Ah, that I were! All the gold that ever the caliphs of the East possessed, if I could call it my own, would I give, to have lived a good Christian; and, oh, how much now would I give to die a good one!"

"Do not despair, my friend, it is not too late; only say that you will try to die a good one."

'Oh, miserable existence, to have obtained nothing better than hell for all eternity!"

"Be calm, friend!"

"Why call me friend, when I have been your bitterest enemy? I sought your life many times, and when your skill proved fruitless to save you, God was your protector. 'God!' Yes, I once was an atheist; I once blasphemed the God who made those numberless stars that peacefully sleep in the bright azure of heaven. An atheist! Oh, how I hate that word! How the blood within my veins boils when that vile misnomen rushes through my fevered brain! Ten thousand deaths with all the terrible devices of torture that ten thousand devils could inflict upon this wrecked carcass of mine could suffer again the thoughts that raised tumultuous insurrection deep in my soul for ten years.

"Atheist! never can that name be applied to mortal man, for as absolutely certain as you see the myriad beams of light that sparkle in the pure sky above, there is no such word as atheist. Scoundrels may take it upon themselves to accomplish some imposition on their fellow-men, but how gladly they relinquish that title when they come to their sober senses, and cast it away as something abominable, bitterly protesting against a distinction they never really wanted. The murderer may choose atheism as a last refuge to the disconsolate terrors of despair that sickens his soul with the phantoms of evils to come; but again, if the faintest ray of hope should dawn upon him in the darkest hour of doom, he would grasp it, though it were as frail as a sunbeam. He swears by the God that made him he was mad, and in

pitiful, heart-broken lamentations, pleads with tears of repentance that the Creator whom he so grievously offended may take pity upon his folly. Every man feels in his heart there is a God."

The tears rolled down the caliph's face as he glanced around and saw the red men looking treacherously at the doctor. With a sweeping wave of the hand he bade them return to their places. They sauntered off reluctantly to the farthest corner ofthe room, where they sat chatting in their unspeakable dialect. It was some moments before a word was spoken between the caliph and the sexton. Jeremy saw that the patient was weaker, and fearing that he might die before he got the information he so greatly desired, proceeded with the conversation.

"My dear friend, your life is fast ebbing away; would it not give you some solace to know that you would be forgiven by all whom you have wronged, if you only asked their pardon?

"Impossible to forgive me," groaned the dying chieftain.

"Remember they are Christians, like meself"

"Yes; but I have offended these three men more seriously," he sobbed, and a look of horror came over his face.

"They are better Christians than I am, consequently they can forget a greater wrong."

"You know them—the people I have so greatly wronged."

"I have partly guessed."

"Ah, young man, you have brought to light a secret that should be known only to the blackest Masons. Ah, at most you could not have guessed all the wrongs that I have heaped upon a poor, defenseless family and all for cursed love, ambition, revenge. How could you hold out to me such sanguine hope of mercy?"

'Perhaps because I know the greater part of your workings. Repent, and forgiveness shall be yours."

"My soul is lost eternally; my secret shall die with me."

"Unless you repent," interposed the sexton.

"Repent—is there still hope?"

"Certainly, my dear Rabbi."

"No, that is wrong; call me Prince Omar; no, that is too honorable—anything, but Rabbi; the Black Prince is preferable."

"Mister Omar, there is no middle way in religion. The Jews have crucified their Messiah, and you can find no foot-hold for eternal life in the story of the Koran. Better become a Christian, aye, a Catholic!"

"Enough of religion. In the arms of unbelief I was born, and in them I will perish. To the creed of my forefathers I owe the cause that has made my existence so wretched. One favor I crave of you, young man; before I die, tell me what has become of the children of the house."

"Prince, they are under my care."

"Swear to me that you will protect them while you live!"

"Only on one condition, sir."

"Name it—I am faint."

"To whom do the children belong?"

"General Dumont," the caliph lisped. The prince's eyes rolled in his head at the mention of this name, until the white alone was visible; his features became purple and distorted, and it was evident to the Irishman that he suffered more in his brain than from the wound in his bosom.

"Swear to me now that you will protect them."

"I'll swear to that, prince."

"Boy, never let the name of Dumont escape your lips. Hear? If you do, I will haunt you till your dying day."

"That I cannot promise you, as I am in the employ of his eldest daughter."

"Angelina's detective! Ha! ha! inquest of Omar, the murderer of her father. Give me but a few moments, and I will escape the gallows. A murderer! How dreadful!—and yet I swore to his wife that I would never do the deed!"

"You are in the hands of God; the law has no longer power over you. I am not a detective; I only sought to repress a scandal."

"Then you understood that I had the general's wife in my power, and why did you not deliver me up to the authorities?"

"For this reason, sir; the lady is highly connected, and I feared scandal would fall upon her name and break the hearts of her loved ones."

"Did you not know that she was a prisoner in this house, bound by chains to the man that she would never consent to marry by threats or flattery?"

"I only surmised that such might be the case. She was then an unwilling resident here?"

"Yes; and all the influence I obtained from Satan or Mahomet, his prophet, to whom I sold my body and soul, proved ineffectual to make her my wife. I loved her so dearly, that without her free consent, I would not force her to become my wife. She was loyal to her husband to the last, and I believe, if there were ever a spirit blessed, she was certainly crowned for her faithfulness and devotedness to her marriage ties. O wretched me, I robbed the general of the dearest treasure in life. I destroyed his house; I murdered himself! O abominable actor have I been, to have played the part of Lucifer, who in turn has worked my ruin!"

Every word that the poor injured man uttered was most distressing to him. It was only with the utmost effort that he spoke. Jeremy, like the good Samaritan, attended to him as though he had been his dearest friend. He bathed his hands and feet, and wet his parched lips with a sponge soaked in brandy and water. The caliph smiled at each kind act done for his comfort. God alone, however, could give the balsam that would cure the dying chieftain. The young Irishman could not refrain from tears as he saw the terror of despair in the prince's countenance, but nevertheless the good-natured Jeremy prayed

hard for his conversion. The caliph looked into the tear-stained eyes of the sexton ; ah ! he might confide the secret of the Manse to him, and taking his hand, he kissed it affectionately, and bathed it in his tears. Finally he recovered strength sufficient to speak :

"Tell me, my dear friend, and I will not despair ; is there yet hope of pardon from the family I have so grievously wronged ? "

"Certainly, certainly, my dear sir."

"Then I commission you to go at once and bring them to me, and also a spiritual adviser."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CLIMAX.

JEREMY made haste in summoning Molly, first, to keep alive, if possible, the spark of life that would reveal perhaps the hidden things that God afflicted the many souls connected with the strange Mystery of the gloomy old Manor. Having warned Miss Angelina to keep her place in the kitchen, the sexton made all haste to the rectory. He briefly stated the purpose of his mission to the priest, Sister Marguerite and the young artist, who from the parlor window were watching the procession as it was being formed into line. Without a moment's hesitation all four, with fast beating hearts, accompanied the Irishman to the Yellow Manse, while the crowds in the street stood in blank

astonishment as they entered the mysterious place. Jeremy led the group to the caliph's room. The sexton whispered to Molly to go and get Angelina, the twins, Lucile and Teresa, and Anna and Mariette, the girls in pearl dresses, who were under Molly's charge in the household. When all stood around the bedside with anxious minds, wondering what would be the last words of the patient, it was a far different group than that which was accustomed to assemble in that room. The pinched face of the nun—a thin skeleton of its former fullness and beauty—showed how keenly she had suffered through the long years since her father breathed his last, with the terrible declaration on his lips of "Murder, divorce and infidelity." The white-faced pastor appeared to look younger than the curate, who had almost worried himself to death. Every moment was a century to Miss Angelina, who stood by the side of her true and tried lover waiting for a word of comfort from the dying chieftain. All stood with fevered brows and palpitating hearts for a sequel of the mystery that shadowed their lives. A deadly pallor came over the prince as he gazed wildly around the room, but the coolness of the Irishman urged him to unload the burden from off his troubled soul. At last, in husky tones he began:

"Ladies and gentlemen, this is a sad meeting, but you are all Christians, and I am told that Christians regard their enemy with an eye of compassion. Behold me, an infidel; and by the fatal wound that is

in my heart, I swear, that had I known the real extent of my guilt, I had never acted to you all as I have so unjustly done. I fought against Napoleon Bonaparte at the Pyramids for my sovereignty, and when my gallant soldiers were standing around me, I stood in bold defence with an open challenge to fight any man single-handed in the vast army of that great general. My challenge was immediately accepted, and a small officer stepped forward, and we fought a bloody encounter. I was severely wounded and stretched out for dead, but my adversary was a gentleman of choicest honor, and he refrained from killing a defeated foe. Downfallen—an outcast of my people, of my kingdom, and a wanderer over the face of the earth, I swore vengeance against Napoleon, and lo! the brave warrior that fought me in the duel."

"What was his name?"

"General Dumont," was the reply to the Irishman's question. Sister Marguerite turned deadly pale, but bravely bore up under the strain which she saw was slowly but surely weighing her down with a fearful burden. "General Dumont," he repeated, "a man inseparably allied to Napoleon, but who, alas! has been, like myself, forgotten in the pages of history." The prince paused for breath. He looked with searching glance about him. He saw the many-colored handkerchief which the nun drew forth to wipe away the tears that were coursing down her cheeks. He gave a heavy sigh and turned his head away. After a moment's pause, he stammered out:

"Great God! Sister Marguerite, do I recognize the pledge I gave you at Moscow?"

The nun opened her eyes like one dazed. She staggered closer to the bedside, and fell upon her knees at the caliph's side, repeating:

"Prince Omar, Prince Omar, I am still your friend; I wish to know something."

"Ask anything in the name of old friendship, and I shall tell you."

"My dear prince, only continue the story of your life."

"Oh, Sister, Sister, does it concern you?" and he searchingly glanced into her large brown wondering eyes with terror-stricken expression.

"Be quick, prince, I will have a talk with you after you have told me something of my family."

"Oh, madame," he whispered, "what was your name in the world?"

"Agnes Dumont."

"O God! ask me anything else, but spare me such a narrative!"

"Prince, remember your promise. Here is the token that binds it." The nun raised the kerchief dramatically.

"Oh, Sister, permit me to break it? Do, please do!"

"Would you, noble sir, have infamy attached to my name?"

"Never!"

"Well, then, dear friend, remove it."

The patient moaned bitterly as he continued: "I treated your mother and sister as worthy of royal blood, not as bondwomen. They were my prisoners."

"But where are they now?" excitedly asked the nun.

"Here is your sister!"

"O Angelina!"

In a moment the two long separated sisters were clasped in each other's embrace.

"My darling child," spoke Sister Marguerite, as she hugged the lady of the Manse to her bosom and bathed her brow with kisses.

The sight was too touching for all present. They respectfully bowed their heads in silence, and between the sighings of their bosom wondered at the strange coincidence. The caliph watched the two sisters nervously, and at length the nun asked, with a deep tremor in her voice:

"Where is mother?"

"She is dead," slowly murmured the patient.

"And died an infidel?" shrieked the nun.

"Be calm, Sister Marguerite; I attended to her in her dying moments," spoke the curate.

"Oh, my mother, one terrible remembrance—infidelity—is blotted out of my brain, and although my poor father was robbed"—she paused—"my mother was neither divorced nor an infidel."

"No, Sister, you have spoken truly; I have but one terrible thing to regret, I—yes—I—you are a

Christian—oh, forgive me,—I murdered your father! I swore to your mother that I would never molest him, yet I sent my servants secretly to kill him, and I believe they succeeded, alas! but too well Oh, miserable being that I am! Oh, I did not slay him! Say that he died of a broken heart!"

"Yes, prince, I was by his bedside when the red men that you sent arrived, but before they could perform the deed my father had closed his eyes in death."

"Oh, God be praised!" exclaimed the dying man, "I am not his murderer; I never meant it—it was a mistaken order. Angelina, the old soldier of the cabin was your father."

The prince could not utter another word. Jeremy applied his remedies without cessation. Indeed, it would be difficult to depict the scene which was occasioned by the group around the caliph's couch. It looked like Resurrection morn, when all those who had been separated in death were seeking for their beloved ones in the newly-risen life. Again the patient aroused himself to consciousness.

"Oh, I have forgotten!" he was unable to complete the sentence. At this juncture the red-haired doctor walked quickly into the room. His rough manner was completely subdued. He was as meek as a lamb. Doubtless the incarceration he had undergone at the command of the caliph calmed his stern nature, and he timidly gazed on the persons around him.

"George Ludovic," said the prince amidst sobs, turning to the curate, "I have a claim to settle with you. You thought you were an orphan, but this was a mistake. I had marked you out for the kingdom because you were a Napoleon. There is your father, whom I have greatly wrong, Doctor Ludovic."

"My long lost boy!" shouted the physician as he rushed into the outstretched arms of Father Delon. "I was hypnotized by the caliph. I was no willing traitor to dear France. I was in the power of this man! Oh, my child! my George!" he exclaimed as he kissed the hands of his priestly son. "Forgive me, my boy, I was not to blame. Here are your sisters, Anna and Mariette."

Soon the young ladies were clasped in the arms of the young curé. Angelina then called Teresa and Lucile, and the four Dumont sisters were for the first time united.

"Now, dear Christians," spoke the dying chieftain, "forgive a poor infidel who, having been in the employ of Satan, exercised his black arts, alas! but too well. An infidel!—no, a Christian! Father, I need your assistance," said he, turning to the rector, who stood close beside him. The party withdrew some distance, and all knelt down in silent prayer, while Father Rogers prepared the caliph for his last journey. The red men, with their small black eyes flashing like so many sparks of fire, sat spell-bound in the corner. Anna and Mariette kept clinging to their beloved brother, while Lucile and

Teresa looked up into the kindly face of Sister Marguerite—and smiled a perpetual smile. Louis knelt near Angelina, and Jeremy took up a central position with Molly. Here was no painted scene, no pantomimed tragedy—but life's real tableaux. When the venerable pastor had prepared the penitent for death, he raised his voice as he commenced the recitation of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, to which all responded. At the conclusion of the prayers for the dying, the priest motioned all to rise and come forward.

The doctor handed the caliph a scroll, and at the same time Sister Marguerite delivered into his hands the many-colored handkerchief. The white-bearded chieftain turned to Louis.

"Take Angelina for your bride, and accept through the courtesy of Doctor Ludovic the privileges and title of a Napoleon, which he resigns in your favor. Unite the House of Bonaparte to that of Louis the Sixteenth, to which Angelina belongs. May the blessings of peace and unity remain on your new sovereignty, which I tried in vain to subjugate for Mahomet by Masonic treachery. Accept, Angelina, this handkerchief, which represents my claim to the house of Constantinople, and may that land which is so borne down by unbelief, be reduced by you to the control of fair France, and may the inhabitants therein be converted to the true God under the Papal emblem. I have lost an earthly kingdom, but have gained a heavenly one."

The caliph opened his little red eyes, and taking the hands of Angelina and Louis in his own, whispered, "I have made my peace with the God of the Christians; for His sake have mercy on me; will all forgive me?" There was an affirmative response given, mingled with tears. The prince smiled. He could speak no more. The action of his heart beat slower and slower. Father Delon, or rather Father Ludovic, raised his hands for the last blessing. The dying caliph murmured something that was inaudible, but he smiled a farewell that his lips could not speak. It was the "Amen" of his checkered life. His eyes closed tightly, and a deadly pallor came over his features. Jeremy felt the pulse, but it had ceased to beat, and the repentant soul was before his Creator. All prayed aloud to God for forgiveness. The red men shouted to their "Allah," but we knew that the prayers of the Christian were stronger, and the soul of the UNCROWNED Prince is now freed at last from the snares of the Evil One, and enjoys an eternal crown in heaven.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WEDDING AND FUNERAL.

EACH in turn viewed the corpse. Jeremy asked permission to begin preparations for the funeral, which was accordingly granted, and in company with his espousedhelp-mate,

Molly, prepared to take charge of affairs. The happy parties left the room, and it was quickly arranged that Miss Angelina Dumont should become the wife of Louis James Bonaparte. Everything was soon in readiness, and the bride and groom, with Molly as bridesmaid and Jeremy as best man, descended together the steps of the Yellow Manse. Lucile and Teresa carried the train of their charming sister, accompanied by Anna and Mariette. The crowd without saw that a marriage ceremony was about to be performed, and observing Father Rogers following the retinue, gave cheer after cheer for him and the bridal party. No sooner had the merry cortege entered the church than the bells of St. Mary's rang out merrily. Vast numbers assembled within the sacred edifice, until it was filled to its greatest capacity. Wealth and beauty knelt in that splendid edifice, but none were as charming as the bride and her maid. Miss Angelina was as pretty as a picture. Her small but beautiful face shone out from under her long golden tresses, which were held together by a diadem of sparkling jewels. Her dress was of white silk trimmed with duchess lace. Around her wrist was a bracelet of sapphires set in gold, the gift of the poor caliph. Molly, who had been unaccustomed to such finery, looked certainly a social light. Her dress was similar to that worn by the bride, and her expression was scarcely less refined. Louis was a typical dressed gentleman, without appearing too flashy or elegant;

his attire might be characterized as neat. He wore a tight-fitting suit of black, while his friend Jeremy was adorned by a new suit of blue serge, which he had kept in reserve. The groom was a man of fine physique. All knew the handsome face of the young artist. His dark features and eyes attracted a great deal of attention, and every one declared that the strange lady had met a suitable match in Louis James. All besides were especially acquainted with Jeremy Owens, the sexton, but they were all deceived when they saw the good-natured Irishman with closely cut hair, presenting a truly nobby front instead of his happy-go-easy motion. All declared that there was going to be a double wedding. The organ played Lohengrin's superb march as, arm in arm, the bridal party walked up the aisle. When Father Ludovic came forward from the sanctuary, the music ceased. The youthful priest, with the simple but solemn ceremony of the Catholic Church, which unites and never dissolves, bound two hearts inseparably together that had loved each other devotedly, and in so doing, united the great houses of Napoleon, Louis the Sixteenth and Omar. When the ceremony was complete, many felt disappointed that they had been cheated out of the novelty of a second wedding. The organ with joyous tones pealed forth again as the happy pair passed down the aisle. The proceedings of the day were such as the oldest neighbors in the parish had not witnessed in their lifetime. The broken statue in the church

reminded those present of the riot of the early morning. One hand of it was raised aloft, pointing heavenward, as if in vengeance, while the other was missing, depicting the utter decay of bigotry. Louder and louder sounded the deep-voiced organ, while the high arches above gave back the echoes in sweet response. The angels from the niches above looked down upon the charming couple, and seemed to bless them.

Bonfires were enkindled anew, and red fire burned everywhere as Louis escorted his bride across the street to the Manse. Father Rogers repaired to the festive board, where the parishioners and invited guests were awaiting his presence. A great crowd surrounded the Yellow Manse, but gradually dispersed as the undertaker's wagon drew up. At the banquet, at the pastor's request, no reference was made to the happening of the day. A good time was indulged in by all. Songs were sung in sweet voices, and speeches were delivered with such grace and elegance that all voted the reception a grand success. The pastor concluded the programme with an appropriate address, which was received with a volume of applause. The banquet being over, Father Rogers repaired to the Manse. He was greeted by the sad wailing of the red men for their departed chieftain. They grieved for him because he was their leader and master, and in him rested the hope that they would return again triumphant, to their houses, there to enjoy the friendship of royalty. But, alas! they

were now in despair. The caliph was dead, and they resolved to work out a livelihood after the manner of so many of their countrymen, rather than be subject to the unscrupulous Sultan. Accordingly, they only requested that their beloved prince be buried the next day, which favor was granted. The gray dawn broke in upon the watchers, and found them wide awake, as if they had not lost an hour's sleep. Jeremy contributed much by his humor to while away, the time. Long before the hour set for the funeral a mass of people surrounded the mysterious old Manse. Every one knew the mystery, but when questioned about it, told a conflicting tale. All points of the case were exaggerated. The darkest kind of plots were planned in a minute, and run to earth in as short a space of time. At last ten stalwart red men appeared at the gate of the Yellow Manse, bearing a beautiful rosewood casket upon their shoulders. The bridal party had changed their wearing apparel for that of deep mourning. The presence of the Turks attracted a great amount of attention. A similar sight had been witnessed not long before at the burial of Mrs. Dumont, which was, alas! conducted under far different auspices. The people looked for the white-bearded old man clad in white, but he was missing, and they rightly guessed that he was the corpse. What struck Jeremy with terror, was the presence of the Turk whom he had fought in a deadly combat in the lake of the mysterious mansion. He thought him dead, but in truth

he was very much alive, and when the Irishman saw that he was not really deceived, he thanked God that his victim was still in the land of the living no matter by what charm he had been preserved.

The casket was borne slowly into the church, which was by this time crowded. Solemn High Mass was offered for the departed soul by Father Ludovic. Instead of the shattered statue that stood under the altar, there was one of exquisite beauty and workmanship in its place. This the young artist had taken from the studio of the house. Back of it was a picture of the Blessed Virgin awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost with the Mystery of the Word. The statue was a work of the twelfth century, while the picture which was modeled after it must have been of the nineteenth. Each bore a likeness to Miss Angelina, and if not indeed a true copy, they certainly portrayed that graciousness and humility that characterized her while waiting for the day that was to manifest the secret of her life.

Mass being ended, the last blessing was given, and the corpse, supported by the red men, was slowly carried to the grave. An enormous throng of people followed. Soon the plot in the little Catholic Cemetery was reached. Angelina, weeping bitterly, placed upon his mound a beautiful basket of white roses mingled with red, bearing the simple inscription, "Omar." With the name perished all that was mortal of the "Uncrowned Prince." Here in the bosom of the little Catholic Cemetery was the man who had

aimed at the sovereignty of the kingdom, the crown of which he was deprived of by misfortune; perhaps he was better off when death called him away. Who doubts but the poor wretch who sold himself to Satan and robbed a broken-hearted family of all peace in the world, was not at last sincerely repentant, and found, through the boundless mercy of Christ, a harbor in heaven for his ship-wrecked life? Before departing from the grave the multitude knelt in prayer; the red men, too, even forgot their cunning, and neglected their "Allah," and bowed their heads in silence. Here and there, whom suspicion might put down as a Mason, a man lisped something under his breath; whether a benediction or curse, the great day alone will tell. All were in tears. Lucile and Teresa on one side, prayed most fervently, while on the other, Sisters Marguerite and Innocentia, her sweet-faced companion, repeated heavenly anthems sweet and low; Louis tried to soothe the sobbing Angelina, and Jeremy performed a like task for his dear Molly. The priests pronounced the last blessing, and the throng arose and departed to their homes. The red men, followed by the mourners, proceeded to the Manse, only to depart hence in a few minutes afterwards, each bearing a basket of tinkets on his head, to become travellers in the wide world, perhaps now and then to exchange greetings on the voyage of life, and perhaps never.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE YELLOW MANSE.

A MORE pleasant looking house could not have been seen a few days afterwards, than that which greeted the passer-by as he gazed wonderingly at the Yellow Manse. The windows, which had remained tightly closed for so many years, were thrown wide open, and the long, fine lace curtains hanging down in graceful folds made the house as cheerful as could be desired. The sun played his golden beams upon the yellow painted bricks, which shone with a refulgence that attracted the eye of the spectator. The flowers looked fresh and beautiful, and the bushes that graced the walls were neatly trimmed. In fact, everything, thanks to Jeremy, appeared charming. Many were the rumors that spread about the city as the gossips awoke from their day dreams. A few of the timid class said with great emphasis, that the place was still haunted by direful spirits. Some declared that they had even seen strange people walking around the building after nightfall. Whatever might be the current belief, none of the inhabitants of the haunted house retained the idea that spirits of the world shared their roof. Louis and Jeremy thoroughly searched the curious rooms and examined the furniture carefully, and explained all the mystery that surrounded them.

The devotee of art, who has made the acquaintance of the artist, would do well to accept an invitation, if tendered, to visit the studio of the Yellow Manse. The physician, too, may learn many valuable things from the skeletons that are laid carefully away in the doctor's laboratory. The mystery of the triangular window has been worked admirably by Jeremy, and he has become so proficient in its mechanism, that by the aid of the electric dynamo he is enabled, no less than the deceased magician, to bring down on stormy nights the lightning of the sky, and furnish a unique entertainment to the social caller that may perchance visit the priests in the rectory across the way. There is only one mysterious part of the house left, and that is its architectural design, so full of windings and labyrinths. It is at once so peculiar and antique that there will always remain a mystery to the Yellow Manse. Everyone in the house is full of life. The prattle of the twins keeps all in roars of laughter. The doctor, strange to say, is so changed from what he really was, that he has become one of their best friends; he cuts up all kinds of capers with them, and they forget his appearance; and whether he is homely or not, it matters little to them. He is as happy as the day is long. Anna and Mariette, too, afford him much comfort in his repining years. Angelina and Louis are kind to him, while his son, the curate, is the pride of his existence. There are frequent visits between the strange house and the convent. Father Rogers often shares in the merry gathering. There is no

one in the parish but sees the improved health of the priest and the kind superioress. The features of the genial pastor are aglow with the flush of health and vigor, and his happy smile is expressive of his warmth of heart. His hair, as white as snow, falls gently upon his shoulders, but the merry ring is still in his laughter, and his people rejoice. The curate is once more himself. His dark face bears no sign of decaying strength, but rather blushes with the robustness of youth. His black eyes shine as brilliantly as ever, and his raven hair, brushed carefully from his forehead, shows that the great trial he bore so meekly has passed away. In the convent all the Sisters are as joyful as their beloved mother, who has recited to them the Mystery of the Yellow Manse over and over again. Her health, while not altogether restored, is greatly improved, and in the breast of the noble nun there beats a heart that is ever grateful to Him who turns all care away. Time passes too quickly when all is happiness; but how wonderfully slow it goes by when all is gloomy and sad! It is noticeable that the good-natured Jeremy, whom everybody loves, pays less visits to his darling Molly. The poor creature is disconsolate, and the days are as weeks, till her lover puts in his appearance. At last, he comes no more to the Manse. Father Rogers explains with sympathetic accents that the poor fellow has contracted a severe cold, which he greatly fears must soon finish him. By degrees the good-natured Celt has faded away. Alas! consumption with its terrors

has laid its heavy hand upon him. No amount of care can save him. Molly, Sisters Marguerite and Innocentia, and Angelina are at his bedside constantly. He grows worse from day to day. He feels that his end is drawing nigh, and bidding a last sorrowful adieu to his lamenting friends, he passes away as gently as a child going to sleep, while the heart of poor Molly is breaking with sorrow. The announcement of the sexton's death puts in true colors his amiable disposition and ease of temperament for which he was thought well of by all who knew him. Molly bore up bravely until the end came, but when he died she was inconsolable. Around the casket in the cosy sitting room of the rectory sit his weeping friends. Louis and the clergymen are talking over the loss of their esteemed companion, while Angelina is endeavoring to console the heart-broken Molly. Thus the long hours of the night dwindle away, and still the grief for the faithful departed continues. Night again approaches—the last one for poor Jeremy on earth—and morning slowly breaks upon the weary watchers. The sun is soon high up in the heavens. Shrieking whistles are calling the toiling masses of humanity to labor. The old tenements stand as of yore, nodding to the inevitable doom of decay. The old river winds its crooked course over the golden meadows asleep in their coat of mist, as the church-bell tolls the sad march of death. In a plain but neat casket, the remains of poor Jeremy are borne away by the children of the Yellow Manse,

closely followed by Molly, supported on the arms of Mr. and Mrs. Louis James Omar Bonaparte. Many of the parishioners come to pay their last respects to the faithful sexton of St. Mary's. A solemn High Mass is celebrated by the pastor, and the curate pronounces the benediction. At the conclusion of the ceremonies the funeral procession passes on to the grave-yard. High above the sobs of the charming twins that resounded through the little churchyard, are heard the sad lamentations of the poor heart-broken Molly. After an interval the church-bell sounds another tap, as if to call the genial Irishman from his last sleep, but, side by side by the grave of "Omar," he will calmly repose until the call of Gabriel rings in his ears. Father Rogers imparts the funeral blessing, and a last prayer is said over the remains of the true and tried sexton of St. Mary's. The sorrowful act is over. Molly has made up her mind to live with the Bonapartes. Though at times filled with grief at the loss of her espoused husband, she is nevertheless contented with the lot heaven has consigned to her. Teresa and Lucile play pranks on dear Aunt Molly as they lovingly call her, while Mariette and Anne regard her as a sister. Miss Angelina and Louis attend strictly to her as if Jeremy were still alive.

The scene of desolation is ended. Sister Marguerite and her sisters are as happy as the day is long. Morning and evening they kindly remember Mr. and Mrs. Dumont, the good-natured Irishman

and Prince Omar in their prayers. The house of the Bonapartes is once more blessed. The people round about guess at the Mystery of the Manse. Some know part of it; others, nothing; but all have a good word for its present occupants. The pastor and curate are again hard at work. Over the desk of Father Delon hangs the picture of the "Uncrowned Prince," which keeps ever fresh in his mind the Mystery of the Yellow Manse.

THE END.

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